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To Mrs. McKair

A little memorial
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with best wishes
from E. C. M. E.
Alexander

Feb 26. 1919.

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN WILTSHIRE



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Highways and Byways

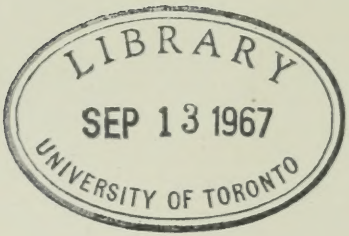
IN

Wiltshire

BY EDWARD HUTTON
WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY
NELLY ERICHSEN

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1917

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TO OUR FRIEND

SIR HENRY NEWBOLT

IN GRATEFUL HOMAGE

April, 1917.

NOTE

The Author of this book, written before the outbreak of the war in August, 1914, wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to very many previous writers, ancient and modern, on the county of Wiltshire, its history and antiquities; and more especially to the various contributors to the *Wiltshire Archæological Magazine* (Devizes, 1866 *et seq.*).

1917

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HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS IN WILTSHIRE

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

IN

WILTSHIRE

CHAPTER I

OLD SARUM AND ROMAN WILTSHIRE

If a man set out by the great West Gate from Winchester, the old capital of England, and follow the Roman road westward, as he may still do, for the most part easily enough, over hill, over dale, through copse and ford, he will come in the twilight at the end of a long day's march upon a vast ancient mound, a huge and stony encampment, on the southern edge of the great lonely upland we call Salisbury Plain spread out as far as the eye can reach, north, east and west before him.

This earthwork, standing there in a solitude only matched in the sky, once beautiful with turf and dark with trees and undergrowth, holy by reason of its beauty and its age, and, as one might have thought, inviolate, contains, as we may think, the roots and the foundations of the old city of Sorbiodunum and is known, and rightly, as Old Sarum; for it was the mother of the beautiful and shining city of Salisbury which lies, exquisitely visible, marked and ennobled by the famous and lovely spire of its Cathedral, in the valley to the south.

If the county of Wiltshire, amorphous as it is in character, has any common centre, hallowed by age and imposed by long tradition: this is it.

Consider it then; to the north upon the western downs

that fall towards the Avon, winding southward out of this loneliness but hidden by the vast waves of the great plain, lies Stonehenge, older than the pyramids and if not the oldest thing in our island, so old that the mind is dazed before its antiquity. Upon the hill here on which we stand, the Roman stood. Northward again, to the east of the Avon, lies Amesbury, one of the first Christian sanctuaries of Britain, a place nearly as holy as Glastonbury, the house of nuns to which Guinevere fled after her sin, whence Lancelot bore her body out of the very hands of the Saxon pirates to lay it beside Arthur in the safety of Glaston. To the south-west lies Wilton with its memories of Alfred and the Saxons; while due south shines Salisbury, the spire of its Cathedral piercing the blue sky, the glory of the English Middle Age.

There is this too. Not a few of those who are so happy as to call Wiltshire their home will turn their eyes northward from Old Sarum to that broken ring of stones and find—and truly—in Stonehenge the centre and the shrine common to their county. But in truth Stonehenge is at once something more and something less than that. From one point of view we may regard that enormous and prehistoric monument as centre of all Southern Britain; every range of hills from the east to the west—the South Downs, the North Downs, the Chilterns, the Cotswolds, the Mendips and the Downs of Dorset, the highways of prehistoric man—points and leads towards it as to a common meeting place or sanctuary. But for us, and for the Wiltshire and the England we know, Stonehenge is sterile, it has no meaning; nothing that is living and a part of our life has sprung out of it and it remains the most revered, the most famous and the most amazing mystery, not in Wiltshire alone, nor even in England, but in Europe and perhaps in the whole world.

Certainly the county of Wiltshire as we know it did not form itself about this uplifted sanctuary that was an inexplicable ruin when Caesar landed. The form of our civilisation is Roman and it is fundamentally about a Roman thing that every part of England has been built up. Therefore, I say that if Wiltshire has a common centre it will be found in the Roman Sorbiodunum which we call Old Sarum.

We know very little of the origin of Old Sarum; nor it seems is the excavation now so unfortunately being carried out likely to throw much light upon it. It certainly dates from prehistoric

times and may well be earlier than the Iron Age; but the main fact about it is that it was perhaps here, as we may think, the Romans founded their famous station of Sorbiodunum, the most considerable Roman centre in Wiltshire, the centre as it might seem of their administration in this part of southern Britain,



and the chief nucleus of the Roman roads between Winchester and Ilchester, east and west, and Cirencester and Dorchester north and south.

It would seem, if we may judge by the remains, and we have no other means of knowledge, that the bare uplands and wet valleys of what we now call Wiltshire were not very grateful to the Romans. Indeed, the most striking archaeological fact

about the county of Wiltshire is the paucity of the Roman remains in comparison not only with those of Somerset and Hampshire, but with those in Wiltshire itself of Prehistoric and Saxon times. Only three Roman stations within the confines of the county are mentioned in the Antonine Itinerary, Sorbiodunum, Verlucio and Cunetio; and Wiltshire can boast of nothing to compare with Aquae Sulis (Bath) or Calleva (Silchester). But few inscriptions have been unearthed within the county, not one epitaph, altar or milestone.[1]

Indeed, by far the most important, if not the only Roman remains within the county, are the Roman roads and the vestiges of the villas upon them.

Of these roads only three are traced in the Antonine Itinerary. Two of these belong to the northern part of the county and do not concern Sorbiodunum: the first, known as the Ermine Street, runs from Cirencester to Silchester, entering Wiltshire four miles north-west of Cricklade, and, running south-east in an almost straight line to Silchester, leaves the county less than a mile south-east of Baydon. The only Roman station of which we have any knowledge upon this road within the county is that very doubtfully identified by Hoare with Nidum to the north-east of Swindon, but it is not mentioned in the Itinerary. This Roman road is still for the most part in use. A hoard of fifty-two coins was found in 1866 at Latton, the first village upon it after it enters the county from Cirencester.[2] Similar coins have also been found at Wanborough, upon the road a few miles south-east of Swindon;[3] while near Baydon, beyond which the Ermine Street leaves the county, *ampullae* and coins were discovered about 1865.[4]

The second road of the three which pass through the county and are mentioned in the Itinerary, runs from Aquae Sulis (Bath) to Calleva (Silchester) and on to London. It is upon this are set two of the three Roman stations within the county

[1] See *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* (Devizes), xxv. (1891), p. 192, and *cf. ibid.* xxxviii (1914), pp. 153 *et seq.* The fragment at Easton Grey, the fourth century inscription at Cricklade, discovered in 1893, a tile at Calne, a round stone tessera "from N. Wilts," the Rudge Cup and a few other fragments are all that have been unearthed in the county under title: inscriptions.

[2] Cf. *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* ix. 232.

[3] Cf. *Camden Britannia*, i. (Ed. Gough, 1806), p. 139.

[4] Cf. *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* x. 106.

of which the Itinerary speaks, Verlucio and Cunetio, the first of which is usually identified with Wans House on the hills by Spye Park above Bromham, the second with Mildenhall, a mile east of Marlborough. A certain amount of support maybe is lent to the identification of the first by the Roman villa discovered at St. Edith's Marsh in the parish of Bromham,[1] while at Mildenhall, Roman remains and a large number of coins have been discovered.

With both of these roads is connected another not mentioned in the Itinerary. This left the Ermine Street at the supposed stations of Nidum, two miles south of Stratton St. Margaret, and crossing the road from Aquae Sulis to Calleva at Cunetio, passed on through Savernake Forest to Venta Belgarum (Winchester), leaving the county by Hampshire Gate. Certain Roman remains at Great Bedwyn, the bronze cup[2] found at Rudge and the pavement of a villa at Littlecot close by, may perhaps be connected with it.

One other Roman road, not dependent upon Sorbiodunum, a most important one though not mentioned in the Itinerary, enters our county: the Fosse Way, which between Bath and Cirencester passes through the north-west corner of Wiltshire, forming its western boundary no less than three times. It enters the county at the Three Shire stone where Wilts, Somerset and Gloucester meet and for two miles forms the boundary between the first and last. Here at Colerne, near Box, Roman remains have been found, among them the pavement of a villa representing part of a chariot race.[3] The road then runs north-east over the foothills of the Cotswolds by North Wraxall and Castle Combe, near which is the site of a Roman villa, discovered in 1859. Some eight miles further on, at White Walls, near Easton Grey, are the supposed remains of the Roman station

[1] *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xix. 290.

[2] This curious cup, a round bronze basin some 2¼ inches by 3¼ in diameter, is illustrated in *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* i. 118. It was found at Rudge in 1725 and is now at Alnwick Castle. It is possible that it is a mediæval basket or perhaps a votive cup recording as it does the road traversed by a pilgrim from his home to the healing spring, as does the Vicarello cup. It is indeed inscribed with an itinerary as follows: Mesa (Mursley), Alaillave (Papworth), Arbelucum (Maryport), Arbeglum (Burghwallis), Luuna (? Coldrain), and perhaps represents the journey from Mursley to Cumberland via Coldrain in the same county. What it was doing in southern England is not clear.

[3] *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* iii. 14.

of Mutuantonis, thus first identified by Hoare, I think. Various finds have there been made. The Fosse Way, just beyond White Walls, once more becomes the boundary of the county for some two miles and then crosses the high land to the west of Tetbury, till by Ashley it again forms the boundary of the county for near two miles, finally passing out of it above Jackament Bottom to Cirencester, four and a half miles away.

These roads, important as they were, led to no great centre within what we call the county of Wiltshire. They set out for Silchester or Cirencester, or Bath or Winchester, and merely traversed Wiltshire on their way to or from these great towns. The true centre of the county, of that district of South Britain which we now call the county of Wiltshire, lay then as now far to the south. It is in the station of Sorbiodunum that we shall find the Roman centre, such as it was, of this district, from which as from Winchester, Silchester, Cirencester and Bath, Roman roads radiate in all directions.

The chief of the Roman roads which serve Sorbiodunum is that main highway noted in the Antonine Itinerary which passes from Winchester to Sorbiodunum, entering by the East Gate. It is by this road we have come to Old Sarum. No station upon it within the county is named in the Itinerary, but just across the Hampshire border we may probably find the Roman Bridge. The road forded the Bourne at Winterbourne ford and Roman pottery has been found at Holbury, and a villa and other buildings at West Dean, which, though some distance from it, the way may have served.

I say this road was the chief of those which served Sorbiodunum; at any rate it connected that place with Venta Belgarum; moreover, of the two which served it from London and the east coast, it alone is mentioned in the Itinerary.

The other road coming in eastward came from Calleva, and is known as the Port Way. It too entered Sorbiodunum by the East Gate. We know of no Roman station upon it nor I think have any discoveries been made connecting it with the county. At Thuxton, in Hampshire, however, a fine pavement with a head of Bacchus and an inscription has been excavated. The Port Way, and this is significant, crossed the Bourne by the ford at Porton.

The Antonine Itinerary connects with the road coming in

to Sorbiodunum from Venta Belgarum, the road running out of Sorbiodunum south-west for Dorchester and Exeter, though it might seem to have nothing more in common with it than with the two roads which left Sorbiodunum and ran westward and north-west for the Mendips and for Bath, or with that running north-east for Calleva or London. On close examination indeed, the road from Sorbiodunum to Dorchester, which would seem to be merely a Roman straightening of an ancient British way and which is still known as the Ickneild Way, proves to have far more in common with the Port Way from Silchester to Sorbiodunum with which it is in direct alignment, than with the way from Winchester. It is, however, perhaps a mistake to regard any of these Roman roads as a unity. From town to town they passed and it may well be as Professor Haverfield suggests in speaking of the Fosse Way, that we are too ready to regard them as one in their whole length. Certainly Sorbiodunum was a nodal point; many roads made for her and issued out of her ramparts, having been made one only in her forum.

Of the three roads which issue out of Sorbiodunum to run westward that certainly would seem to be the most important — it is the only one mentioned in the Itinerary—which runs to Dorchester. It seems to have crossed the Avon a little to the east of Stratford Dean, forded the Nadder and Wylye where Bemerton now stands, and the Ebble at the ford of Stratford Tony, running on over the Downs south-west to Vernditch Chase, where it forms the county boundary against Hampshire, and presently, after crossing a tongue of Hampshire land less than half a mile wide, it enters Dorset by Woodyates.

The other two roads running north-westward and westward out of the west gate of Sorbiodunum are more doubtful. That to the Mendips was first mentioned and first surveyed by Sir R. C. Hoare. According to him it ran through Maiden Bradley, climbed Mendip near its eastern extremity and crossed the Fosse on Beacon Hill in Somerset. Mr. Haverfield evidently does not believe in the existence of the road. As he says, "its actual traces are very scanty . . . . it rarely coincides with any straight existing road and still more rarely with any parish boundary . . . . it passes scarcely any inhabited Roman site and no village or town. Its supposed objective, the harbour at Uphill, rests on scanty finds of late coins."

The last road, from Sorbiodunum to Aquae Sulis, is more doubtful still and seems finally to rest upon a supposition of Hoare's. He, however, did discover upon it in the neighbourhood of Warminster, about half-way between Bath and Old Sarum, remains which he took to be a Roman station but no sign of a Roman causeway and at last he had to confess that this road is a mere conjecture.

It will thus be seen that though we have both written and material evidence for at least three Roman highways in Wiltshire, we know very little concerning them and nothing at all of the administration which created them or of the life here and the towns which they served. Sorbiodunum was the chief Roman Station within the confines of our county we may be sure, but we have no other evidence for it than the roads. For of Sorbiodunum itself we know nothing nor has the excavation lately undertaken increased our knowledge. Apparently, scarcely any Roman objects have been found and the excavation committee have to report that though "there are good reasons for identifying Old Sarum with the Roman Station of Sorbiodunum of the 12th and 15th Antonine Itineraries, nothing at present is known about it."[1]

What are we to say then of "Roman Wiltshire"? Little more it might seem than that we know scarcely anything about it. It could boast of no *municipium* such as Verulam nor of any *colonia* such as Colchester, York, Lincoln or Gloucester. It cannot even be compared with its neighbours, Hampshire or Somerset, for it would seem that it possessed no town of the importance of Silchester or Winchester nor any watering place that might vie with Bath. Sorbiodunum was less than these, though like them in this, that it was a pre-Roman foundation. The truth about "Roman Wiltshire" would seem to be that it had nothing in the way of mineral wealth or of political or natural attraction such as its neighbours had to draw to it the Roman power in its fulness. It was then, as it still is, a country of great pastures, a bare and wind-swept downland, cut by deep and wet valleys in the south, a land of shepherds; a low and

[1] Sir W. H. St. John Hope, who, with Col. Hawley, is in control of the excavation, tells us (*Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xxxviii. (1914) 445) that "it is doubtful whether the site [of Old Sarum] was really that of Sorbiodunum." He thinks it possible that the Roman Station was at Stratford.

wet pasture and forest in the north, and everywhere surrounded by richer and more fortunate countries which attracted a far greater share of Roman wealth and energy.

In South Wiltshire, at any rate, we find but two Roman villas between the Somerset and Hampshire borders, namely, those at Bishopstrow and West Dean, the latter, indeed, just over the Hampshire border. Nor have we in the whole county any trace of Christianity of the Roman time, such as we have in Dorset, Hampshire and Gloucestershire, and shall almost certainly find in Somerset. It is true there is Amesbury, and it awaits excavation. It is possible that there if anywhere, something as fine or finer than the foundations of the church at Silchester will be found. At Sorbiodunum, however, we have nothing.

It would be foolish, nevertheless, to under-rate the importance of Sorbiodunum. It was never certainly the equal of such a place as Venta Belgarum, but it was the most important town in the Downland between Winchester and Silchester on the east and Dorchester and Ilchester, Bath and Cirencester on the west, and this comes to light later, when after the destruction of the Roman administration an ordered civilisation was restored to Britain by the Normans.

We know nothing at all of the fate of Sorbiodunum and but little of that of Wiltshire in the Dark Ages. That the pagan Saxon pirates broke in here as elsewhere, and destroyed what they could we shall see when we come to consider the nunnery of Amesbury: but of the fate of Sorbiodunum in that appalling catastrophe we know nothing. Roman as it was, however, it survived, and was certainly a place of some importance in Saxon times, coins of Cnut and Edward the Confessor were struck there so that we may consider it as a chief town, and we are confirmed in this opinion by the fact that in 1075 the bishopric of Sherborne was moved thither by the Edict of the Council of London, which, in accordance with the Roman plan of Christendom, directed that the episcopal sees should be transferred from the villages to the chief towns. So the see of Somerset was removed from Wells to Bath.

It is then that the true history as apart from the legend or the archaeology of Old Sarum may be said to begin, and curiously enough it is then that the name by which it and its daughter are known through the world to this day first appears; in the

Domesday survey we first read of "Sarisberie" which, as it seems, was then in the king's hands.

As we see to-day, the vast foundations of "Sarisberie" or Old Sarum consist of two mighty earthworks, one within the other. The greater of these resembles an enormous tumulus



Old Sarum.

some 300 feet high, the top of which, an irregular oval, contains some thirty acres. This huge work was encircled and fortified by a deep and originally continuous ditch, now interrupted and crossed, east and west, by causeways of rubble, earth, and chalk and the ruin of the centuries, leading to the entrances within, which are themselves defended by hornworks of their

own, protected by ditches. In the midst of this gigantic affair, rises another earthwork, nearly circular in shape, and surrounded by a wide and deep ditch, crowned on the inward side by a high bank; this was the citadel.

It would seem that this smaller earthwork was a building of the Norman Conquest, that it held the Norman castle, and it is probable that when it was built the outer area beneath the two earthworks was divided into eastern and western parts by two great banks running north and south. The eastern section would seem to have formed the outer bailey of the Castle, the western was the liberty of the Bishop and held to the north of it the Cathedral Church.

One enters the great earthwork, no longer, as only so short a time ago, lovely with trees and undergrowth, but now despoiled of all its beauty and at the mercy of the excavators, past Old Sarum Farm by the East Gate of the outer bailey, across which one passes directly up to the inner work, entering the inner bailey by the ruined great gatehouse on the east. To the right, or north, towered of old the mighty Norman keep, a work of the first years of the twelfth century; within its southern wall towards the east was the chapel of St. Nicholas, and before it, to the south, is the great well of the Castle, perhaps 300 feet deep, in the very middle of the inner bailey. Opposite the great gate, upon the west of this inner earthwork stood the postern gate with its tower and to the south-east of this the great Hall, to the east of which there is another well. But there is after all but little to see to-day, only a brickfield, a wilderness of stones. We shall get a better picture of the place as once it was from the fragmentary notes of annalists and the entries in the Liberate Rolls than from all these dead stones.

To begin with, we may be sure that before the Norman came with his Roman passion for solidity and for stone, the inner earthwork here all about the Castle and inner bailey was defended by wooden palisades upon the crests of the banks. These timber walls were presently replaced by masonry, when we do not exactly know, but the "Annals of Winchester" assure us that the Castle was built by Bishop Roger, elected in 1103 and consecrated in 1107. Perhaps he walled the stronghold with stone, and built the great Keep which was certainly finished before his death in 1139. All through the twelfth century, however, great works were in course of building, here and in the

thirteenth century we have certainly a complete castle, possessing with the two towered gateways, the great gate and the postern, no less than five towers beside the great tower or keep.

There would seem to have been two chapels within the Castle beside that we may still in some sort trace dedicated to S. Nicholas. These were built in honour of S. Margaret and the Blessed Virgin, and in the latter was the Bishop's seat, for his Cathedral Church was dedicated too in honour of Our Blessed Lady.[1]

Beside three chapels, we read that over the great gate of the outer bailey, that is the gate near Old Sarum Farm, there was a church or chapel dedicated in honour of the Holy Cross. Here, too, in the outer bailey stood the gaol.

Let us now turn for a moment to the Bishop's Liberty, within the western half of the outer earthwork, where, to the north, as I have said, after 1075 rose the Cathedral Church.

The first missionary to bring the Faith to the West Saxons was St. Birinus, as we know a Benedictine monk of Rome sent by Pope Honorius. He had been consecrated Bishop on his way to Britain, at Genoa, by the Bishop of that city and he landed in Wessex in 634, to become the first Bishop of the West Saxons. He presently erected his see at Dorchester in Oxfordshire, where in 650 he died and was buried.[2] About 676 the see was removed from Dorchester to Winchester when the King of Mercia deprived the West Saxons of all territory north of the Thames; but the diocese remained a single one, and it was not till Ina ascended the West Saxon throne in 688 that the unwieldy Bishopric was divided and all that part of it which lay "west of Selwood" was placed under St. Aldhelm, who had his see at Sherborne, at which time Bishop Daniel ruled at Winchester.

So things continued, till eight years after Alfred's death "King Edward and the bishops," as William of Malmesbury tells us, "chose for themselves and their followers a salutary council, and heeding Our Saviour's words, 'the harvest truly is plenteous but the labourers are few,' elected and appointed one Bishop to every province of the West Saxons and divided

[1] It may well be that the Bishop had a seat here long before the See proper was removed to Old Sarum. Something similar probably obtained in Bath.

[2] St. Birinus' body was carried to Winchester later.

that district, which till then possessed two, into five bishopries." The new sees then erected were established at Wells, Crediton,



and Ramsbury in the county of Wiltshire, a village in the valley of the Kennet. Ramsbury continued to be a see of the Wiltshire and Berkshire Bishops till the middle of the eleventh century.

At that time Hermann was Bishop of Ramsbury. He was a native of Lorraine, and was probably one of the clerks of the royal chapel under the Danish dynasty, and held that office when, in 1045, Edward the Confessor appointed him Bishop of Ramsbury. Ramsbury, however, had no congregation of monks or canons, its revenues were small and Hermann, who had been St. Edward's ambassador to Rome, was ambitious and discontented. He pleaded his poverty continually, for his predecessor in the see was Brihtnold, now Abbot of Malmesbury, and a far richer ecclesiastic than himself. In 1055 Brihtnold died, and Hermann at once besought the King for the abbey and begged permission to remove his see thither. The King consented, but the monks refused, and sought the aid of Earl Harold, who persuaded the King to withdraw his consent three days after it had been given. Hermann was furious and left England to become a monk at St. Omer ; his diocese meanwhile was administered by Aldred, bishop of Worcester, who had been his co-ambassador in Rome. But Hermann found the ascetic life of the monks of St. Omer worse to bear than the poverty of Ramsbury. He repented of what he had done and, in 1058, when the see of Sherborne fell vacant, he asked for the bishopric and received it, thus uniting the sees of Ramsbury and Sherborne and becoming Bishop of Wiltshire, Berkshire and Dorset.

Foreigner as he was, Hermann did not lose his see at the Conquest. On the 29th August, 1070, he assisted at the consecration of Lanfranc, and five years later was present at the Council of London when it was ordered that episcopal sees should be removed from villages or small towns to cities. Not unjoyfully, we may think, he removed the see of his united diocese from Sherborne to Old Sarum, and at once began to build a great Cathedral church within that old hill fortress. But he died before he could finish it, in April, 1078.

The work was continued and completed by Hermann's successor, St. Osmund, and according to Simeon of Durham, was consecrated by Walkelin, Bishop of Winchester and John de Villula, Bishop of Bath, on April 5th, 1092. St. Osmund, in fact, is looked upon as the virtual founder of the church of Old Sarum,[1] and it was this which led to a desire at an early

[1] For this reason the Catholic Church in Salisbury is dedicated in his honour. It is a rather charming building after a design by the elder Pugin.

date for his canonisation, which, however, was not fulfilled till 1452. A man of exemplary life, his real work was not so much the completion of the Cathedral as the creation on the Norman model of an ordered body to serve it.

The completion of the church was followed by one of those appalling catastrophes so common in the Middle Age. Five days after the consecration of the church it was struck by lightning and half destroyed. William of Malmesbury speaks of this tempest. "In the fifth year (of William Rufus) a thunderstorm similar to that which in the previous year had devastated London, entirely destroyed the roof of the church tower and much injured the wall at Sarum, only five days after Osmund, the bishop of famous memory, had consecrated it." The reddened and scorched stones laid bare by the recent excavations were probably damaged in the catastrophe. The church was evidently very badly ruined, for the same chronicler tells us, under the date 1119, that Osmund's successor, Roger, who held the see from 1107 to 1139, "built anew the church of Sarum and adorned it in such a manner that it yields to none in England, but surpasses many, so that he had just cause to say: "Lord, I have loved the glory of Thy House."

This Roger is one of the great figures of English history. Of humble birth, and in his youth priest of a little chapel near Caen, he owed his great fortune to the fact that Prince Henry Beauclere (afterwards Henry I.) riding out of Caen one morning happened to pass his little chapel and stayed to hear Mass. Roger, it seems, got through his Mass so quickly that morning that the King declared him the very priest he was looking for and took him into his service. The astute and tactful Roger, unlearned and even as is said, unlettered though he was, soon won his King's confidence, so much so indeed that when Henry became King he made him his Chancellor, and in 1102, invested him with the Bishopric of Sarum, but Anselm refused his consent and Roger was not consecrated till August 11th, 1107. Not long after this triumph, Roger was raised to the office of Justiciar and William of Malmesbury tells us that he had the governance of the whole Kingdom whether Henry was in England or in Normandy, and certainly Roger was responsible for England when the King was absent and was the custodian of Robert, Duke of Normandy, after Tinchebray, keeping him "as a noble pilgrim" according to

the King, perhaps in his Castle of Sarum and certainly at Devizes.

When Henry died and Stephen of Blois claimed the throne, Roger sided with him and thus secured him the Treasury. Stephen in return retained him as Justiciar and declared he would give him half England if he desired it : " he will be tired of asking before I am of giving." But this prosperity did not last. In 1137 rumours of his treason reached Stephen. Roger was then in control of the whole kingdom. His mistress, a beautiful and brave woman, Matilda of Ramsbury, held the Castle of Devizes ; his son by her—also Roger—was Chancellor ; his nephew, Nigel, was Bishop of Ely and Treasurer ; another nephew, Alexander, was Bishop of Lincoln. He himself was Bishop of Sarum, lord of the Castles of Sarum, Sherborne and Malmesbury, and Justiciar. All his castles he had built and fortified as his nephews had done those in their dioceses. It is no wonder that such a man, treasonous or not, excited the enmity of the Barons. The king listened to his accusers and bade him and his son and nephews come to Oxford on June 24th, 1139. They went. Stephen demanded the keys of their castles ; they demurred and were arrested. Nigel of Ely, however, escaped and fled to Matilda de Ramsbury at Devizes. Stephen marched against him with his prisoners in his train. When Nigel refused to give up the place the King starved Roger the elder, till after three days Matilda surrendered the keep. This ended the rebellion. Roger's other castles were given up, but with the assistance of Bishop Henry of Winchester, the King's brother and Papal Legate, he and his contrived to retain those castles which belonged to their sees, and Stephen even had to do penance for his treatment of them. Roger, however, had apparently suffered too much. On December 11th he died at Sarum.

It was this great builder of castles who, annexing to his see the Abbeys of Malmesbury and Abbotsbury, refounded the Cathedral church of Sarum. But we know very little of this great Norman church, which was certainly among the greater glories of Norman England ; it was destroyed too soon.

In the year 1227 the whole ecclesiastic establishment, with the civil population, left Old Sarum for the new city and church founded in 1220 in the meadows to the south, beside Avon, where the beautiful city of Salisbury still stands. We may

well ask for the reason of this revolution. That question is at least partly answered by the Mandate which, upon April 18th, 1217, Pope Honorius III. sent to his Legate in England, instructing him to inquire and report on a petition of the Dean and Chapter of Old Sarum. We read there that the Dean and Chapter "state that the Cathedral church, being within the line of defence, is subject to so many inconveniences that the canons cannot live there without danger to life. Being in a raised place the continual gusts of wind make such a noise that the clerks can hardly hear one another sing, and the place is so rheumatic by reason of the wind that they very often suffer in health. The church they say is so shaken by wind and storm that it daily needs repair; and the site is without trees and grass and being of chalk has such a glare that many of the clerks have lost their sight. Water they say is only to be got from a distance and often at a price that elsewhere would buy enough for the whole district. If the clerks have occasion to go in and out on business, they cannot do so without leave of the Castellan, so that on Ash Wednesday, Holy Thursday and on synodal and ordination and other solemn days, the faithful, who wish to visit the church cannot do so, the keepers of the Castle declaring that the defences would be endangered. Moreover, as many of the clerks have no dwellings there, they have to hire them from the soldiers, so that few are found willing or able to reside on the spot."[1]

In that document certainly we have a sufficient answer to the question: "Why was Old Sarum thus suddenly abandoned?" But there is this also. In the time of Bishop Roger, as we have seen, the Castle of Old Sarum, which he had made so formidable, was entirely within his control. Upon his death, however, the castle would seem to have passed out of the Bishop's hands, and if this was not so in the time of his immediate successor, Bishop Jocelin, it was certainly the case when he died. No Bishop was then appointed for five years and even when Hubert Walter was invested with the see, he was absent with Richard I. in the Holy Land, so that it is doubtful if he ever saw his diocese, for on his return he was elected Archbishop of Canterbury. That was in November, 1193. In the following year, Herbert

[1] See *Calendar of Papal Registers*. Papal Letters i. 1198–1304, p. 42. quoted in Report of the Excavation Committee to Soc. of Antiquaries for 1909. See of Ant. Lond.

Poore was elected to Old Sarum. This man, who was in 1217 succeeded in the Bishopric by his famous younger brother, Richard Poore, was, in some way not quite clear, connected with Roger, son of the great Bishop Roger, surnamed Pauper or Poore to distinguish him from his father, one of the richest lords in England. From 1185 Herbert had had custody of the see of Sarum, and in 1186, with the consent of Henry II., the canons of Salisbury had elected him—for he was one of their number—Bishop, but a minority among them appealed to the Pope on the ground that Herbert was of illegitimate birth and the election was quashed, Hubert Walter was appointed instead, and it was only after his translation to Canterbury that Herbert Poore finally obtained Sarum. It was he, who, so it seems, conceived the idea of removing the see from the hill of Old Sarum to the plain. Nor did he meet with opposition from his predecessor, now Archbishop. It is obvious that within the walls of Old Sarum there was not room for two lords, an ecclesiastical and a civil lordship. So long as the Castle was in the hands of the Bishop, all went well. When the King appointed other governors, the Bishop was, in truth, at the mercy of the civil power, his rights and even his liberty were in jeopardy, and every hour he and his people were subject to insult, inconvenience and intimidation.

Herbert Poore was not, however, destined to see his plans realised. He died in 1217 and was succeeded by his younger brother Richard, who from 1198 to 1214 had been Dean of Sarum. In the latter year he had been appointed Bishop of Chichester, to be translated to Sarum upon the death of his brother. A man of great experience in ecclesiastic polity, his most important work was yet the removal of his see to New Sarum or Salisbury and the building of the magnificent Early English Cathedral, one of the greater glories of England, which we all know and love so well. Old Sarum was left to the garrison of the castle, the old church was closed and partly destroyed, its ruins passed into the King's hands, and when, in 1327, licence was granted to the Dean and Chapter to wall the great close of their new church, as we may still see, the King made to the Bishop, the Dean and Chapter a gift "of all the stones of the Cathedral church of Old Sarum and of the houses within the king's Castle there which the Bishop and Canons of that church formerly occupied, for the repair of their church and for the enclosure of the

precinct of the same." This was the last of the great church of Old Sarum, which was accordingly razed to the ground.

Yet contrary to the usual belief, something would seem to have remained, even as late as the sixteenth century, of what must have been one of the most glorious Norman churches in England. About 1540 Leland came into Wiltshire and we have in his Itinerary the best description of Old Sarum at this time: "The Cite of *Old Saresbyri*," he writes, "standing on an hille is distant from the New a mile by north-weste, and is in cumpace halt a mile and more. This thing hath bene auncient and exceeding strong; but syns the building of *New-Saresbyri* it went totally to ruine . . . . *Oswaude*, erle of *Dorchestre*, and after Bishop of Saresbyri erected his Cathedrale chirch ther in the west part of the town; and also his palace; whereof now no token is but only a chapel of Our Lady yet standing and mainteynid . . . . Ther was a paroch of the Holy Rode beside in *Old-Saresbyri* and another over the est gate Whereof some tokens remayne. I do not perceyve that there are any mo gates in *Old-Saresbyri* than 2; one by est and another by west. Without eche of these gates was a faire suburbe. And on the este suburbe was a paroche chirch of S. John; and ther yet is a chapel standing. The river is a good quarter of a myle from *Old-Saresbyri* and more, where it is nerest on to it, and that is at Stratford village south from it. Ther hath bene houses in tyme of mind inhabited in the est suburbe of *Old-Saresbyri*: but now ther is not one house neither within *Old-Saresbyri* nor without it inhabited. Ther was a right fair and strong castella within *Old-Saresbyri* longing to the Erles of Saresbyri especially the Longerpees. I read that one Gualterus was the first Erle after the conquest of it. Much notable ruinus building of this castelle yet ther remayneth. The diche that environed the old town was a very deepe and strong Thynge."

Perhaps all these buildings which Leland speaks of as still standing were destroyed in the Civil War, perhaps they simply fell to nothing from mere neglect, at any rate they disappeared and were utterly forgotten. Only in a very dry summer the outlines of the foundation of the Cathedral church could still be seen, and in 1834 a certain Hatcher made a sketch of these, which was engraved in his *Salisbury*.[1] Then, in 1912, the Society

[1] According to the sketch the church was about 240 feet long.

of Antiquaries begun what—since it was to spoil for ever the beauty of the place—I cannot but think its unfortunate excavation. This unearthed the foundations of the Cathedral church and showed that it had consisted of "an aisled and square-ended presbytery with eastern chapels, north and south transepts with a south porch, and of a nave and aisles with an added section at the west end." [1]

More than this was, however, discovered. The presbytery of the church thus laid bare was obviously that "made new" after the catastrophe of 1092, between 1119 and 1139. But what of Bishop Osmund's church? This was presently traced, its presbytery lying where the crossing and transepts of the later church stood, its semicircular apse projecting a little eastward. This first church proved to be 173 feet long from east to west and 113½ feet across its transepts. It consisted of "an apsidal presbytery with narrow north and south aisles, square ended outside but probably apsidal within, north and south transepts each with an eastern apse, a tower over the crossing and a nave and aisles. The church also boasted a cloister and chapter house over a crypt like the church of Wells; this of Old Sarum being probably the earliest example in England of a non-monastic cloister.

As for the later church, that of Bishop Roger, it had the same nave and aisles as the old church, but the rest of it was a new building from the foundations. Sir W. H. St. John Hope suggests that it was the laying out of the cloister—certainly the last of Bishop Osmund's works, if indeed it be his at all—which suggested the enlargement of the church by a new presbytery. But surely the new presbytery was necessary on account of the damage done to the older church by the storm of 1092? However that may be, the new presbytery was built on a noble scale. It consisted of four bays "with piers set upon a low wall raised above the floor in the same way as in the Cathedral church of Salisbury of to-day. The arcades opened into aisles which were carried a bay eastwards and joined by an ambulatory behind the presbytery end. The presbytery not improbably had an arcade of three narrower arches towards the ambulatory, with its eastern windows above. Beyond the ambulatory, which was a step higher than the aisles, was

[1] See Report by W. H. St. John Hope, of Excavation Committee, for 1913 (Soc. of Antiquaries, 1914).

a row of chapels." The transepts were very splendid, having both western and eastern aisles and other unusual features. The north transept abutted on the chapter house; the south had a noble porch. Over the crossing was a tower. Altogether the church as altered by Bishop Roger, with its added western chamber, the only addition to the old nave, was some 316 feet long and some 138 feet across the transepts. It must have compared well with the Norman churches of Winchester or Ely or York, and even with Westminster Abbey; indeed it was one of the noblest buildings in England.

Really nothing remains of all this splendour for us to-day; a few walls, the outlines of the foundations laid bare by the excavations, a sort of wilderness of stones, fragments of carvings, rough hewn coffins, a multitude of gable mouldings and so forth. In truth, for all the spoiling of Old Sarum, till yesterday one of the great silent sanctuaries of England that nature had hallowed with its own beauty and the long past of our country had covered as with a shadow, we know little more than we always knew, little more than Leland had told us: while what was beautiful is now ugly and brutal as a rifled tomb. So that no one, I think, can leave Old Sarum to-day without a sort of indignation against the folly of those who have become accomplices of a vandalism that is not even aware of itself. Their excuse is I suppose that they know not what they do.



Milford Bridge, Salisbury.

CHAPTER II

SALISBURY

THERE are half a dozen or more different ways in to Salisbury in the meads, and it would be hard to say which of them all is the most beautiful. There is the way in by the Southampton road, or the road from Andover, which, coming down towards the city from a certain height on the east, gives you a view of the Cathedral so full of amazement and delight—cliff above cliff, pinnacle upon pinnacle of grey stone, and towering over all, pointing in ecstasy to heaven, the incredible spire itself, a visible act of faith complete and perfect—that it haunts the mind ever after like a melody, a melody unheard, of whose loveliness the eye informs the soul.

Then there is the way in from the south with its double beauty, in which you pass from one perfection to another, perhaps in the late summer afternoon when the light is level, and all the meadows lie in a peace so absolute one seems to be still in the golden age which has never really left Southern England after all. There, as you come up out of the valley of the Ebble over Harnham Hill towards Salisbury, suddenly,

not too near nor too far away, you behold the city and possess it all at a glance, its shining and rosy beauty against the grim and lonely downs to the north, upon which rises the ancient hill of Old Sarum. In the foreground beneath you, a little way off beyond the triune stream, caught about as with a silver zone, the very girdle perhaps of the Blessed Virgin whose church this was, stands the Cathedral, a casket on a green cloth of damask, a wonder in the meadows, exquisitely set with dark trees, a shining thing, certainly beyond the dreams of the modern world. You descend the steep hill and, by a half neglected and devious way, find the river beside an old mill and so follow a path across a weir, and along the stream; and all the way into Salisbury at every step are blessed with a new vision passing from perfection to perfection, the Cathedral changing before you in an ever-deepening harmony of grey stone and light, soft meadow and foliage of loveliest green, blue sky and golden sun and chance shadow, the sound of many little waters in your ears.

This delight too you may win if as a prelude, well worth having, you, coming from the west, pass under the eastern wall of Wilton and find your way through Netherhampton, and then by the meads and the dear meadows of the Nadder, by the great and holy elms and the leaning willows again to East Harnham. It might seem indeed—at least I have often convinced myself of it—that it was of Salisbury, on some late afternoon of summer, those verses I love so well speak in their perfect beauty:

"Many an afternoon
Of the summer day
Dreaming here I lay;
And I know how soon,
Idly at its hour,
Fast the deep bell hums
From the minster tower,
And then evening comes,
Creeping up the glade
With her lengthening shade,
And the starry hum
Of her lengthening noon."

The city which thus shines at the end of so many approaches is, like its sister Wells but unlike its sister Winchester, wholly of ecclesiastical origin. Moreover, it is the latest born of all the towns in southern England.

As I have already said, New Sarum or as we say, Salisbury, was the creation of Richard Poore, who came down from Old Sarum, by leave of Pope Honorius, to build a new Cathedral church and to set up his throne therein in the earlier part of the thirteenth century, because it had long been felt that the ecclesiastical power situated within the walls of Old Sarum was at the mercy of the royal castle and its garrison. Probably the ecclesiastics, and perhaps the townsmen, were dependent upon the wells within the inner bailey of the castle for their water. At any rate, a lack of water was, as they said—and Peter of Blois, himself a canon of Salisbury, echoes the complaint in his poem—one of the reasons for their appeal to the Pope for permission to remove to the meads, where, indeed, in "the sink of the plain," at the meeting of three of its streams, there was more chance of flood than of drought. It is certain the height of Old Sarum was windy and cold; "saevit ibi ventus," says Peter of Blois. But these were no new hardships; they had been endured for more than a hundred and fifty years. What was new was the fact that after the death of the great Roger, the Castle of Old Sarum had been transferred by the king to the keeping of lay castellans, that the bishop was no longer master in his own city. Indeed, it is more than probable that the crown was anxious to be rid of the ecclesiastics and was making things as difficult as possible for them on that account. "What has the house of the Lord to do with castles?" asks Peter of Blois. "It is the ark of the Covenant in a temple of Baalim. Let us in the name of God descend into the meads. There are rich meadows and fertile valleys abounding in the fruits of the earth, profusely watered by living streams. There is a seat for the Virgin Patroness of our church to which the whole world cannot produce a parallel." In many ways he was right; at least, neither Wells nor Winchester has a situation so fair to-day as Salisbury upon its peerless lawns amid its secular elms.

It was in 1217 that Pope Honorius appointed his commission to report upon the change demanded by the church of Old Sarum. In that year Bishop Herbert Poore died and was succeeded by his younger brother Richard, translated from Chichester. One of Richard's first acts was to send special envoys to Rome on the business of the Cathedral, and it was they who obtained from Honorius the Bull which gave permission for the change, dated March 29th, 1219.



This Bull runs as follows:—"Honorius, Bishop, Servant of the Servants of God. To our reverend brother Richard, Bishop, and to our beloved sons the dean and chapter of Sarum, health and Apostolical benediction. My sons, the dean and chapter, it having been heretofore alleged before us on your behalf that forasmuch as your church is built within the compass of the fortification of Sarum it is subject to so many inconveniences and oppressions that you cannot reside in the same without great corporeal peril; for being situated in a lofty place it is, as it were, continually shaken by the collision of the winds; so that whilst you are celebrating the Divine Offices you cannot hear one another, the place itself is so noisy, and besides, the persons resident there suffer such perpetual oppressions that they are hardly able to keep in repair the roof of the church, which is constantly torn by tempestuous winds; they are also forced to buy water at as great a price as would be sufficient to purchase the common drink of the country; nor is there any access open to the same without the licence of the castellan. So that it happens that on Ash-Wednesday, when the Lord's supper is administered, at the time of the synods and the celebration of Orders, and on other solemn days, the faithful, being willing to visit the said church, entrance is denied them by the keeper of the castle alleging that thereby the fortress is in danger; besides, you have not there houses sufficient for you, whereby you are forced to rent several houses of the laity, and that on account of these and other inconveniences, many absent themselves from the service of the said church. We, therefore, willing to provide for this exigency, did give our mandate to our beloved son Gualo, priest, cardinal of S. Martin, legate of the Apostolic See, by our letters diligently and carefully to inquire into the truth of and concerning the premises and other matters relating thereto, by himself and others, as he should see expedient and faithfully to intimate unto us what he should find. And whereas he hath transmitted unto us, closely sealed up under his seal, depositions of the witnesses hereupon admitted, we have caused the same to be diligently inspected by our chaplain, who hath found the matters that were laid before us concerning the inconveniences before mentioned to be sufficiently proved, therefore the truth by his faithful report being more evident, we do, by the authority of these presents, grant unto you free power to translate the said church

to another more convenient place, but, saving to every person, as well secular as ecclesiastical, his right, and the privileges, dignities, and all the liberties of the said church to remain in their state and force. And it shall not be lawful for anyone in any sort to intringe the tenor of this our Grant, or to presume rashly to oppose the same, and if anyone shall presume to attempt it be it known to him that he will incur the indignation of Almighty God and of the Blessed Saints, Peter and Paul, His Apostles. Dated at the Lateran the fourth day of the calends of April, in the second year of our Pontificate."

The Bull was given as we see within the octave of the Annunciation. The site at last chosen was known as Myrfield, and according to some, was within the domain of the bishop, "in dominio suo proprio." Others assert, however, that the Blessed Virgin herself chose the site, appearing to the bishop in a dream and bidding him found Her church in a place called Myrfield.[1] "With this he awoke, giving thanks to God; but no one would tell him where the place was. Nevertheless, some days after, it was discovered in the name of a certain meadow, and there he founded the church of the Blessed Virgin on S. Vitalis's day."

Bishop Richard Poore set about his work most systematically. Upon receipt of the Papal Bull, having chosen the site for the new church, he set apart a portion of it as a cemetery and immediately built a wooden chapel in which upon Trinity Sunday, in that year, Mass was sung. Then he called his chapter together on the Feast of the Assumption (August 15th), and beside certain resolutions as to building houses of residence, it was decided that the translation of the Cathedral should take place on the Feast of All Saints (November 1st), and that certain canons should go as preachers or collectors of alms on behalf of the new Cathedral to various dioceses. William de Wanda, the precentor and first dean of the new church, who has written an account of all these things, went to London, others to Winchester, Exeter, Chichester and even to Scotland. We must suppose they were successful. At any rate on the Feast of St.

[1] Myrfield is the popular modern form, and no wonder, Maryfield is deference to the legend. A simpler explanation of the word is found in the fact that the site chosen was at the point of junction of the three ancient hundreds of Underditch, Alderbury, and Cawdon, and was therefore called Moorfield or boundary field.

Vitalis, April 28th, 1220, the foundations of the new church were laid, and though the king was unable to be present, for he was then in Wales making treaty with the Welsh, the concourse of notables was considerable and the ceremony splendid. After saying Mass, the bishop took off his shoes and all went barefoot, the clergy singing in procession the Litany of the Saints, to the place chosen. Here after consecrating the ground, and making a sermon to the people, he laid the first stone for Pope Honorius, the second for the Archbishop Stephen Langton, and the third for himself. William Longespée, Earl of Sarum, who was then present, and whose marvellous tomb remains one of the greater glories of the church, laid the fourth stone, while his Countess Ela, countess in her own right, who was to found Lacock Abbey in her own behalf and Hinton Charterhouse, the second Carthusian house in England, in honour of her dead husband, laid the fifth stone; after her certain noblemen added each of them a stone and then the dean, the chanter, the chancellor, the treasurer and the archdeacons and canons of the church of Sarum who were present, did the same, "amidst the acclamations of multitudes of the people, weeping for joy and contributing thereto their alms with a ready mind, according to the ability which God had given them." Extraordinary measures were taken to expedite the work thus begun and with such good results that in the course of five years, the bishop was able to consecrate three altars within the church.

Bishop Poore had built for him a hut in which he lodged that he might ever be near to watch the builders and to urge them on. This lodging is said to have been at what is now called Mitre Corner, where of old stood the Lamb Inn. To this day a bishop on his enthronement at Salisbury starts in procession from this place. Bishop Poore had gathered about him a noble band, of which the most notable were De Wanda—who was elected dean at a chapter in which the bishop sat as canon (Dominus autem Episcopus qui et canonicus est), upon the Sunday after the Exaltation of the Holy Cross upon September 14th —who has left us a full account of all their proceedings, and Elias De Dereham, described as rector of the new church for twenty-five years from its foundation. He it is who was the magister fabricae, the true builder of Salisbury Cathedral. No doubt, too, within the five years from 1220 in which the great fabric rose, Bishop Poore, like Bishop Osmund before him,

was re-establishing his chapter on a scale worthy of the new church. Then, in the year 1225, the bishop was able to bid the Dean De Wanda to cite all the canons for the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels (September 29th). On the vigil of the Feast, in company with Stephen Langton, the archbishop, and others, he consecrated three altars, in the Lady Chapel and in the two side aisles, the first in honour of the Blessed Trinity and All Saints, "on which thenceforward the Mass of the Blessed Virgin was to be sung every day." For the daily service of this Mass the bishop offered two silver basins and two silver candlesticks, bequeathed to the church of Old Sarum by that supposed daughter of William the Conqueror who married William de Warren. The second altar was dedicated on the north in honour of St. Peter and the third on the south in honour of St. Stephen. On the following day the public consecration of the church was proceeded with. The Mass was sung by the bishop in the presence of the Papal Legate and the archbishop, who preached a sermon.[1] On the following Thursday the king arrived with Hubert de Burgh and heard the Lady Mass sung, offered ten marks of silver and a piece of silk and granted to the church the privilege of a yearly fair, from the vigil to the octave of the Assumption (August 14th to 21st), and Hubert de Burgh vowed a "gold text," that is, I suppose, an illuminated Missal or Book of the Gospels set with precious stones and the relics of divers saints, in honour of the Blessed Virgin and for the use of the new church. The text was delivered the following day. All the offerings were appropriated to the use of the fabric, except such as were given for the ornament of the church. The king was in Salisbury again and made new offerings on Holy Innocents' Day following, and within the octave of that Epiphany, William Longespée, returning from Gascony, was received in procession. Eight weeks later he died in the Castle of Sarum, and was buried in the new church which he had helped to found. He was the first to be laid to rest within the new fabric; but in 1226 the bodies of the blessed Bishop Osmund, of Bishop Roger and of Bishop Jocelin were brought down from Old Sarum and laid in the new church.

Bishop Richard Poore had during these ceremonies entertained

[1] The main fabric was consecrated in 1258, and all being finished, a similar ceremony was again performed in 1260.

the king and the other notabilities at his "house," so that it is obvious the Palace was already built, at any rate in part, and as we shall see the old portions of the present building date from this time, While in Salisbury at the beginning of this year, 1227, the king gave the bishop the first charter of the new city, confirming to the church all the liberties and privileges which had belonged to the old Cathedral and granting some new immunities. In this charter we read that "New Saresbury shall for ever be a free city enclosed with ditches or trenches; that the citizens shall be quit throughout the world of toll, pontage, passage, pedage, lastage, stallage, carriage, and all other customs; and thus be placed on an equality with the citizens of Winchester . . . ." The bishop and his successors were also authorised by the charter to enclose the city "with competent trenches for fear of robbers and to hold it for ever as their proper domain, saving to us and our heirs the avowson of the see and every other right which in the same when vacant we have and ought to have in like manner as in other Cathedral churches in our kingdom, being vacant." Other privileges, especially a weekly market as well as an annual fair, were granted and no doubt helped greatly to attract people to the place. When all was accomplished, the new city founded, the new Cathedral built, in 1228, Bishop Richard Poore was translated by a Papal Bull to the see of Durham.

He was succeeded by a canon of the Cathedral, Robert Bingham (1229–1247), who ruled for eighteen years. He continued the work in the Cathedral with considerable energy, and involved the treasury on this account in a debt of seventeen hundred marks but he left the church to be finished by his successors, the courtiers William de York (1247–1256) and Giles de Bridport, who was Dean of Wells when elected.

As Giles de Bridport left the church, in the middle of the thirteenth century, it remained till, in 1329, Robert de Wyvile was elected bishop at the intercession of Queen Philippa, wife of Edward III. He was a singular person. Walsingham asserts that it was hard to say whether he was more dunce or dwarf, more unlearned or unhandsome, and adds that had the Pope seen him he would not have ordained him. He ruled in Salisbury for more than forty years and it is to him, as we may suppose, that we owe the great glory of the church, the unequalled spire—the beacon of the plain. He it was, too,

who walled the precincts, being granted by the King "all the stone walls of the former Cathedral church of Old Sarum and the houses which lately belonged to the bishop and canons of the said church within our Castle of Old Sarum, to have and to hold as our gift for the improvement of the church of New Sarum, and the close thereunto belonging."

Then, in the latter part of the fifteenth century, chapels were added to the choir on either side of the Lady Chapel; on the north, in 1464, the chapel of Robert, Lord Hungerford; on the south, in 1481, the chapel of Bishop Richard Beauchamp. They were both utterly destroyed as was so much else here by James Wyatt in 1789.

The church thus founded and built remains one of the great buildings of Europe. In external effect, and especially from the north-east, it is in its own way unsurpassed in England and though it has not the great dramatic qualities which their wonderful situations lend to Durham and to Lincoln, the marvellous stillness and tranquillity of the close of Salisbury, its ideal and all satisfying peace more than make up for what it lacks in dramatic splendour. Its beauty is an English beauty. If the traveller would understand it, would seize it, as it were, all at once, let him come by St. Anne's Gate or out of the homely littleness, not without its own dignity, of the High Street, through the narrow gate there, into that quiet close, a thing unique even in England, and unapproached anywhere else in the world. The Cathedral stands there beyond the ancient elms like a great casket upon the wide lawns which centuries have brought to perfection. Here is no fortress as Heine chose to consider the French churches, "the fortresses of our enemies," but the very shrine of the Prince of Peace. And those houses, half hidden by the trees, standing as it were in a loving deference so far off, covered with creepers and old ivy and vines, they too belong to a world no longer perhaps wholly real, but shall be at home here always by long custom and immemorial right. They chime with our hearts and are ours as sometimes the Cathedral refuses to be. In this unworldly place it is as though by chance on a summer day we had wandered unforewarned into the golden age, abiding only here, steadfast and for ever, as the flowers do in spite of everything, in perfect beauty.

And yet, ought we not to confess it, the very perfection of

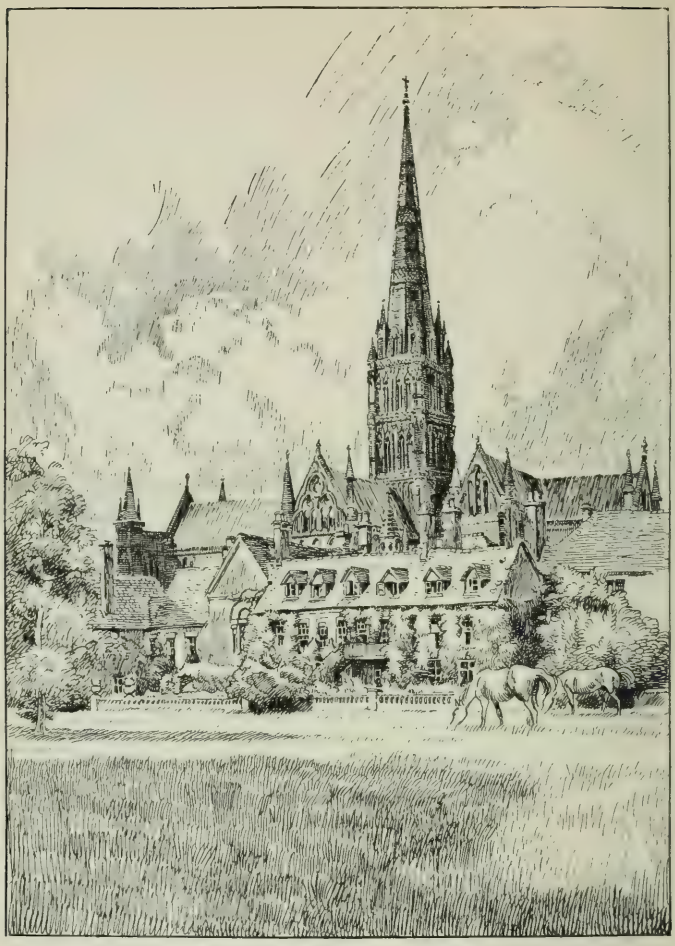
Salisbury makes it unsatisfying, at least to English eyes. Consider Winchester or Wells. There you find indeed something



High Street Gate, Salisbury, from the Close.

comparable with the soul of England, a growth so organic and realistic that no buildings in the world are to be loved by us more than they, for it is ourselves we see in them. There,

and in how many others of the great English churches, you have the most romantic buildings in the world, to which nothing in France or Italy is at all comparable. You enter maybe a Perpendicular nave built in the fifteenth century and thence pass into a Norman transept, and so from an Early English choir into a Decorated Lady Chapel behind the sanctuary. There you have the very soul of England still marvellously expressive in living stone through all the centuries. It is a unique and a wholly English achievement, due to our curious conservatism, our detestation of destruction, rather than to any real love of beauty. The French genius was more daring, more unscrupulous and more sure of itself. Such an anthology as Winchester is would have been perhaps abhorrent and certainly unsympathetic to their ever living need for creation, for order, and for reality. Well, here at Salisbury, because the church was founded anew in the thirteenth century upon this virgin site, you have something outwardly at any rate after their hearts—a complete church all of one period, the work of one builder, at any rate following one design. It is curious that to our eyes it is only saved from a certain dulness by the glory of the spire—a work not contemporary with the church, nor even contemplated by its builder, Elias de Dereham, but an addition of the fourteenth century. Why is this? It is certain that we do not feel this disappointment, however long we may look upon Amiens, for instance, or Notre-Dame de Paris. Is it because in those churches the spontaneous fire of the creation, the mere genius of the builder and of the soul of France have there produced works as certainly living and at one with themselves as the greatest of lyric poems, whereas at Salisbury we have not so much a living organism as a building consummately made, it is true, but an adaptation, not a creation. The plan of Amiens is the conception of a mind so certain of its end and of its ability to reach it that when it was begun it was finished; at Salisbury we have nothing of this supreme vitality. The long church with its square extremities, really church added to church, has no real unity; its chapels are merely additions, its west front is without meaning, a literary frontispiece with no real relation to what lies behind it. All this would be understandable—and after all it is to the intellect that architecture must first appeal—and certainly delicious if we had in Salisbury the work of three or four different ages, if the Cathedral was, as it



The Palace and Cathedral, Salisbury.

were, a growth in which many hands and hopes and centuries had had their part; but when we see before us this Early English church wholly of the thirteenth century we are aware of its

lack of vitality, its mere size and complexity add only to its monotony, and were it not for the majestic and unifying beauty of the triumphant fourteenth century spire the Cathedral would be so dull as to be disappointing because it would be merely an endless repetition without organic life.

This will seem a hard saying to many, and perhaps to most, Englishmen. Fortunately the triumph of the spire hides what would otherwise be obvious and makes of Salisbury in reality the great church it was meant to be. But the spire was not contemplated by Elias de Dereham. He began the Cathedral in 1220 and his design was completed in 1266. The church consisted then of what we see, save the west front and the tower and spire. Thus, here alone in England, we have a complete Cathedral church built by one man within a period of forty-six years, at perhaps the greatest epoch of building the world has ever seen. The result is a perfectly symmetrical building complete with double transepts, Lady Chapel, north-western porch and south-eastern octagonal chapter house. Indeed, Elias de Dereham would seem to have hoped to give us a new and more elaborate version of Beverley Minster, an exterior like, but how much less vital than Westminster Abbey. With the latter at any rate, even in the opinion of the Dean and Chapter of Sarum, he failed to compete. His whole design lay there low in the meads and seemed to demand a great tower and spire that it might have life. In or about the year 1330 this was decided upon, and the glorious tower and spire we see were built at an enormous risk with unexpected daring and incredible success.

Elias de Dereham's central tower only just rose above the roofs, and was indeed much the same as that we still see at Winchester. About 1330, in the time of Bishop Robert de Wyvile (1329–1375), it was decided to add two stages to this and to build over these a vast spire, not of wood but of stone, up into the sky. The conception was that of a madman or a genius; that it was entirely successful, though at some cost to the stability of the church, seems to decide the matter in favour of genius.

Consider, then, what was thus dared and done. That tower and spire rise more than four hundred feet into the air and are the loftiest in England.[1] They are of stone. With their

[1] The loftiest spire in England: but the flèche of Amiens rises 422 feet

victorious beauty in mind, enter the Cathedral and stand beneath them at the crossing. It is only with a certain personal fear one may linger there and note the piers, bowed under so many hundred tons of stone. Standing in the marshy ground here, where the three rivers meet, they were never meant to bear that weight. It is as though one had found here in England the daring and the reckless joy that piled up Beauvais.

To support this miracle great flying buttresses within and without were added, and something of the terror of those who achieved the work may be understood perhaps when it is realised that the tower walls are but shells exquisitely banded and decorated, with an octagonal stair turret at each angle, crowned with a small and crocketed spire. The great spire itself, also octagonal, rises from between four exquisitely decorated pinnacles, but even here its walls are but two feet thick, and at twenty feet from this base, all the way to the top, they are but nine inches. No wonder the builders left their wooden scaffolding within, without that the miracle would, as they feared, certainly have fallen. Later in the fifteenth century stone girders were placed across the piers of the central and eastern transepts to hold all up, not too successfully.

It is well that, without, the daring of the spire does not terrify but rejoices one. It makes the whole building one, saves it and lifts it out of itself and assures us by its beauty and nobility of its own victorious security, which we never doubt till we enter the transept. If it were not so, this mighty achievement would be unbearable, and instead of one of the great achievements of civilisation would be but a freak of barbarism. I like to know, as I see it from the uplands or the meads soaring there ever into the blue with pointed hands in prayer, that it holds up to the angels stooping in adoration the only relic left to us here of the Blessed Virgin, whose dowry England once was and in whose honour within our seas there stood no fairer church than this.

It would seem that the chief fault of this, the only classical building in England, the most perfect and symmetrical achievement in architecture we possess from English hands, was foreseen

into the air. The French genius was infinitely more daring than ours. The roof of Sarum nave is but 115 feet from the ground, even externally. That of Amiens stands 208 feet over the girth. The loftiest nave in England is that of Westminster Abbey and it was a French design.

by the builder, who, in binding it about with five mighty horizontal courses—the parapet, the corbel table, and no less than three string courses—seems to have attempted as it were to hold it, buttresses and all, together. But this was not enough, only the spire has secured the unity of the whole, and that by a stroke which would be madness but for its marvellous success. As we see it, in its own loveliness, its gravity and repose, its exquisite colour, its completeness, and in the beauty of its surroundings, it stands alone; and if it has not the romantic beauty of Winchester or the magic beauty of Wells, it can boast of something they lack, something which is more at one certainly with our very selves, in its restraint and quietness, its lack if you will of enthusiasm. It might seem indeed of all medieval buildings to approach nearest to the modern soul in its reticence and lack of eccentricity or mysticism. It has much of the quality of that evening hymn we have always known, which because we have always known it, and it is noble and simple too, can even in middle life and in a far country still bring the tears to our eyes; it expresses just that emotion of nostalgia in us, whereas in Wells we still seem to hear the *Alma Redemptoris* coming from the Lady Chapel, and in the transept of Winchester the *Dies Irae*, things, alas! we have forgotten; whose moods, lovely or terrible, we are strangers to, though they still echo there from old time.

Here at Salisbury too, though the west front has as little relation to what lies behind it, we have nothing at all comparable with the magnificence of the famous west front of Wells. Though this was Our Lady's Church, here was no antiphon of the Blessed Virgin in stone, but something as simple and full of repose as the rest of the church. Nay, rather something so dull that it is hard to excuse it. The whole is too flat so that it is almost without light and shade, and the porches, as almost everywhere in England, are absurdly small and altogether without imagination. Some fifty years ago even the air of antiquity and repose which the years had given this façade was destroyed. The popular sculptor of the day was let loose on it by Scott, and having manufactured eighty statues to illustrate the Te Deum! placed them in the niches as we see. Is it not monstrous that ignorance and imbecility should be allowed to disport themselves on such a work as this?

Without, indeed, and it is without that Salisbury is at

its best, the Cathedral, thanks to the spire, is a single thing, a perfect casket, less "Gothic," indeed, than any other Gothic church in the world, because less picturesque and romantic; but in its "perfection" it might stand beside the Parthenon.

One thing, however, we miss to-day, which was peculiar to Salisbury, and completed this view of the cathedral from the north: the bell-tower. This belfry, which was contemporary with the church, stood between the Cathedral and the north wall of the churchyard near where a solitary and weather-beaten elm still stands. It was wantonly destroyed by Wyatt, who, as we shall see with others who came after him, did so much damage to the church; but in the dry summers of 1887 and 1893, its foundations were clearly visible as they were to my knowledge in 1896 and 1911. It must have added greatly to the beauty of the Cathedral Church. No writer, however, has left us any description of it and we are dependent upon the old views of the Cathedral for our knowledge of its appearance. Of these views, that by Easton, a north-east view of the Cathedral, is perhaps the best, but Price, in his "Observations upon the Cathedral" (1753), gives a plan and section of the belfry to scale and an elevation of the lower part of the building. From these sources Mr. Harding has compiled the following description:[1] "The Belfry was a building of great strength and solidity, admirably adapted to its purpose of containing a great peal of bells.[2] The substructure was 33 feet square in the clear of the walls, which were of stone, about 8 feet thick, flanked by three buttresses on each of its four sides, and rising to a height of nearly 80 feet from the ground to the top of the parapet. On each side were four lancet windows, and in the centre of the interior an octagonal stone shaft from which projected corbels supporting the timbers of the floors. On the exterior there was a boldly moulded plinth to the walls and buttresses, similar to that on the outside of the Cathedral . . . . Above this massive and lofty stone base was a superstructure of oak consisting first of a square tower, each external face being divided

[1] "The Belfry formerly standing in the Close of Salisbury and its Bells," in *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* (1896), xxviii. pp. 108 *et seq.* A rough cut of the Belfry appears in iii. p. 124 of same magazine.

[2] Admirable, too, we may think, in its contrast with the lightness of the church.



into eight arched compartments with tracery heads and spandrels; four of these divisions were pierced as windows, and the openings filled with louvres. Above the tower rose an octagonal turret, divided into stages by horizontal strings and covered with leaden work of herring-bone or zig-zag pattern, finished by an embattled parapet. From this level sprang the steeple which was also covered with lead of similar design, and terminated with a metal cross; the weather-cock which appears above the cross in view of the belfry having no doubt been a later addition to it."

This remarkable structure stood about 200 feet high, rising more than 50 feet over the original low tower of the church. It was entered upon the southern side and the lower part was served by a circular stone staircase in the masonry of the south-east angle. It was especially designed for the bells which were probably brought from Old Sarum. By the end of the fifteenth century there would seem to have been at least twelve of these constituting the peal. We read of the "Clock Bell," the "Morning Bell," "St. Osmund's Bell," the "Bell for the first Mass," and the "Tolling Bell."

The belfry also boasted a clock and a dial and would seem from very early times to have been used as support for shops. In 1473, at any rate, we read of "three shoppis subtus le belfray." It escaped the vandalism of the Reformation and the Civil Wars only to be destroyed by James Wyatt. This fellow was at work "restoring," as he said, but in truth destroying, the Cathedral in 1790, and there can be no doubt that he demolished the belfry, to obtain, by the sale of the materials, funds for his work. The Dean and Chapter of his day are more guilty than he. In March, 1790, the clock and bell, for only one remained there at that time, were removed to the Cathedral and the belfry having been torn down the materials were sold, as appears from the following advertisement in the *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* of March 15th, 1790.

"SALISBURY.

"To Builders or Persons engaged in Building. To be sold in any quantity and upon reasonable terms the materials of a very large Building; consisting chiefly of Stone Ashlar, Rubble Walling, Oak Timber, Lead, Iron, Slates, Tiling, and various articles of inside furnishing, the particulars of which may be known by applying to Mr. Matthews, Clerk of the works carrying on at the Cathedral at this place."

It is said that the interior of Salisbury Cathedral has been sacrificed to its exterior effect; and yet how fine it is! No one surely can ever really have been disappointed in that lofty heaven of light, at any rate, not until fools had their way with the Purbeck marble *and oiled it*, thus destroying the harmony of the delicious colour scheme, for the tone of the marble should be silver grey and is now a dark and dirty brown in amazing contrast to the piers. Some find the church too light and, though I cannot agree with them, it is certain that it is far lighter to-day and colder than it was before the wholesale destruction of the glass at the Reformation. But when all has been said we can only rejoice in that lofty and so spacious nave, eighty-four feet high, by eighty-two wide, with the aisles, 33½ feet without them: a good proportion of 2½ to 1. This sense of fine proportion inspires the whole building and, with the wonderful harmony of design, is responsible for the chief effect of Salisbury, an effect of repose. If anything could spoil this it is the unfortunate design of the triforium, ugly in itself, and uglier now by reason of the dark mass of the Purbeck, and the insecurity of which we become aware in the crossing; the piers are too tall, too fragile, too slender for the weight they have to bear. On the other hand, the space is entrancing everywhere and the vistas all very noble, though perhaps lacking in subtlety and certainly lacking the dazzling beauty of Wells.

What Salisbury Cathedral must have been before the vandalism of the Reformation had touched it one can only conjecture, for its rude handling in the Civil War and the still more ruthless restorations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have stripped it bare as we see. The glass which must have lent to the nave much of what it now lacks was, in so far as the figured windows are concerned, destroyed by Bishop Jewel, the first Protestant to occupy the see. All that he left was a few fragments, of a wonderful fire and loveliness, which have been gathered very carefully and successfully into the great western window which fills the church with a diminished glory even yet at sundown.[1] But Jewel, vandal and bigot though he

[1] "The beautiful window contains some lovely shields of the latter half of the thirteenth century. *Gold three chevrons gules* is Gilbert of Clare. *Two gules and gold of eight pieces* is Eleanor Queen of Hen. III. and daughter of the last Aragon Count of Provence. *Azure powdered with fleurs de lis or gold* is St. Louis of France, brother in law of Henry III.

was, was not the only sinner. What the Cromwellian soldiery achieved we do not rightly know, less, perhaps, than might be thought, at any rate, Dr. Pope, in his "Life of Bishop Ward," tells us that even in those troublous years the church was kept in repair, though secretly, and even that one of Waller's officers was compelled to restore what he had stolen, though that included "certain copes, hangings, and a picture of the Virgin."

It remained for the eighteenth century to surpass here in vandalism and ignorant brutality every age which had preceded it. We know, for we can see on all sides, what destruction Wyatt worked upon the fabric; screens, chantries, tombs, all went down before this braggart and ignoramus; but we only miss the glass. A letter, however, published by Mr. Nightingale,[1] brings home a crime so wanton that were it not for the written word it would not be credible. The letter was written by John Barry, glazier, on June 16th, 1788, and runs as follows:—

"Sir,—

This day I have sent you a Box full of old Staind and Painted Glass as you desired me to doe wich I hope it will sute your Purpos it his the best that I can get at Present. But I expect to Beatt to Peaceais a great deale verey sune as it his of now use to we and we Due it for the lead if you want Eney more of the same sorts you may have what thear his, if it will Pay for Taking out, as it his a Deal of Truble to what Beating it to Peaceis his you will send me a line as soon as Posobl for we are goain to move ore glasin shop to a Nother Plase and thin we to save a greatt Deale more of the like sort wich I ham your most Omble Servant John Berry."

Endorsed, "Berry ye Glazier about beating the fine painted Glass Window at Sarum to pieces to save the Lead."

Mr. Nightingale tells us that "the greater part of the glass so destroyed was probably the portions then remaining of the original 'grisaille' windows of the middle of the thirteenth

Gules three leopards gold is Henry III. of England, *Silver a lion gules with a crown gold in a border sable bezanty* is Richard, Earl of Cornwall, brother of Henry III. *Gold cross gules* is Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk. A seventh shield has, on a field of white glass a green demon and a blue border with discs of yellow glass. This is a composite affair consisting of the glass of several centuries, the blue border being modern. Possibly these shields refer to the Crusade of 1268, but it is hard to see why they were set up here in Sarum. They are of the finest beauty." *See* Rev. E. E. Dorling in *W.A.M.* xxix. 113.

[1] *See W.A.M.* (1881), xix. p. 226.

century." And this was accomplished under the auspices of Bishop Barrington, who should be famous for it.

But Bishop Barrington failed to destroy the beauty of the church as Jewel failed. The nave to-day in the cold light of the pale modern glass and the bareness and emptiness that alone Wyatt left it, is nevertheless of considerable beauty and charm. The noblest monument in it, placed by Wyatt there under the last eastern bay upon the south side of the nave from the western sanctuary is the most precious tomb outside Westminster Abbey in all England. I mean the painted wooden altar tomb bearing a slab of stone and upon it the magnificent effigy of



Tomb of William Longespée, Salisbury Cathedral.

William Longespée, first Earl of Salisbury. The guide books will pass this by with a mere glance, but it should be famous through the world, for there is nothing in the world to surpass it, and little to equal it. In England only in Westminster Abbey may we find anything with which it may be compared. The great earl, carved all in stone, clad in complete chain armour, lies on his back as though asleep, his head exquisitely turned to the right; his left arm bearing his shield, lovely with the six golden leopards of Anjou, his right arm fallen by his side, the heavy armour fallen from it; more wonderful than the life. Nothing in the world is grander or more touching than this exquisite statue, a masterpiece of the thirteenth century; it is worth any trouble to see: indeed, it is the fitting reward of a long journey. The figure is of stone,

as is the slab upon which it lies, and was once all painted with bright colours, the shield blazoned. All is now but a shadowy grey. The tomb upon which the slab rests is of wood and was once, as may still be seen, richly painted and gilt. It is surrounded by a lovely arcade of wood within which linen was stretched, covered with *gesso* and painted; a little remains.

This tomb, incomparably the finest in the church, by some unmerited good fortune remains to us less utterly destroyed than we could have hoped. Next to it, westward, is the spoilt effigy of Bishop de Wyvile, who completed Bishop Poore's work and died in 1270. Like all the tombs, it is absurdly out of its place here in the nave. That beside it, the so-called monument of Charles Lord Stourton, of old stood in the east end of the church, for it is indeed all that is left of the defaced and forgotten shrine of Salisbury's saint, St. Osmund. Those curious apertures on either side which are said to represent the six sources of the Stour by Stourhead, the seat of the Stourtons, and may be seen in their arms, are indeed the openings at which the pilgrims knelt. As for Stourton, he was hanged in 1556 in the Market Place of Sarum for the murder of two men, father and son, who had thwarted his design of blackmailing his mother. He was hanged on account of his rank with a silken cord, and a noose of twisted wire, it is said, was suspended over this tomb as a memorial.

The next tomb westward is that of Robert Lord Hungerford, who died in 1459. The splendid effigy is represented superbly clad in complete plate armour of the fifteenth century, the mysterious collar SS about the neck, a finely decorated sword and dagger hang from the jewelled girdle, the feet rest upon a dog with a fine collar. This work originally stood near the Lady Chapel beside the chapel founded by Lord Hungerford's widow, Margaret, daughter of Lord Boteraux, which Wyatt brutally destroyed, making the base of this tomb out of part of the débris. Lord Robert, who was as unsuccessful a soldier as his father had been successful, fought at Towton field and being taken prisoner soon after was beheaded at Newcastle. He came of the great family which owned Farleigh Hungerford Castle in Somerset[1] and was laid to rest here in Salisbury

[1] See my *Highways and Byways in Somerset*, p. 74.

beside his father as a concession to the dignity of his name. Farleigh became forfeit to the crown won by Henry VII.

The Hungerford Chantry was not the only one destroyed by Wyatt. That built by Bishop Beauchamp was also pulled down and even the tomb of the founder "mislaid." The bust of Bishop Beauchamp (d. 1463) now lies in the tomb west of that of Robert Lord Hungerford; beyond it is an altar tomb of the fifteenth century; whose, thanks to Wyatt, we are unable to say.

Beyond are two slabs with figures in low relief ante-dating the Cathedral, brought here from Old Sarum and said to be from the tombs of Bishop Roger (d. 1139) and Bishop Jocelyn (d. 1184). They are among the earliest things of the sort in the country, and can only be matched it is said in the cloister of Westminster. The head of Bishop Jocelyn is evidently an addition later than the rest of the figure. Beyond these two slabs stands a flat coffin-shaped stone, also from Old Sarum, said to have covered the remains of Bishop Hermann (d. 1078).

Opposite to this rude slab on the north side of the nave is a similar sarcophagus of which nothing would seem to be known. Next to this eastward is a curious Early English monument, popularly proclaimed as that of a "Boy-Bishop," who died during his period of office. It was found in the seventeenth century under the choir stalls and placed here at that time. We know nothing of it. It may even be what it is popularly supposed to be. For of course Salisbury, like any other Cathedral, had its Boy Bishop elected on St. Nicholas' Day (December 6th) and deposed upon the Feast of Holy Innocents.

St. Nicholas is deemed to be the patron of children and more especially of all schoolboys, among whom December 6th used to be a very great festival for more reasons than one. In bygone times all little boys either sang or served about the altar at church, and the first thing they did, we read, upon the eve of their patron's feast "was to elect from among themselves in every parish church, cathedral, and nobleman's chapel, a bishop and his officials, or as they were then called, a 'Nicholas and his clerks.'" This Boy Bishop and his ministers afterwards sang the first vespers of their saint and in the evening in proper vestments they went about the parish. In those days all were glad to see them, and such as could received them into

their houses to bestow a gift of money, sweetmeats or food upon them. Towards the end of evensong on St. John's Day (December 27th) the little Nicholas and his clerks, in Salisbury in their copes, with tapers burning in their hands and singing those words of the Apocalypse (xiv.), "Centum quadraginta," went in procession from the choir to the altar of the Blessed Trinity, which the Boy Bishop censed, and afterwards, the antiphon [1] having been sung by all, he recited the prayers commemorative of the Holy Innocents.[2] Going back into the choir, these boys took possession of the upper Canons' stalls, and those dignitaries themselves served in the place of the boys, carried the candles, the thurible, the book, like acolytes, thurifers and lower clerks. Standing on high, wearing his mitre and holding his pastoral staff in his left hand the Boy Bishop gave a solemn benediction to all present; and while making the sign of the Cross over the kneeling crowd, he said:—

Crucis signo vos crusigno; vestra sit tuitio
Quos nos emit et redemit suae carnis pietio.

Upon the next day, the Feast of Holy Innocents, the Boy Bishop preached a sermon, which had been written for him of course. We have one from the pen of Erasmus. And at Evensong Bishop Nicholas and his clerks officiated as on the day before, and, until 1279, took a conspicuous part in the services throughout the octave of Childermastide. In 1279, however, Archbishop Peckham decreed that all should end with the second vespers of Holy Innocents' Day. So things endured till all were destroyed by Cranmer, who forbade even the procession. Queen Mary restored these harmless rites, to the joy of the people, as we read: "the V day of December, 1556, was Saint Necolas evyn, and Saint Necolas wentt a-brod in most partt in London, syngyng after the old fassyon and was reseyvyd with mony good pepulle into their howses, and had

[1] Aña. Hi sunt qui cum muliéribus non sunt coinquináti: vírgines enim sunt, et sequúntur Agnum, quocúmque íerit.
V. Heródes irátus occídit multos púeros. *R.* In Béthlehem Judae, civitáte David.

[2] Oratio. Deus cujus hodiérna die praecónium Innocéntes Mártyres non loquéndo, sed móriendo conféssi sunt: ómnia in nobis vitiórum mala mortífica; ut fidem tuam, quam lingua nostra lóquitur, étiam móribus vita fateátur

myche good chere as ever they had, in mony plasses." [1] The custom finally disappeared with the change of religion under Elizabeth.

To the east of the little tomb of the Boy Bishop, if such it be, is the monument to the son of William Longespée (d. 1250). It cannot, of course, be compared with the noble tomb on the north side. The second Longespée lies there, his legs crossed, in chain armour, with elbow plates and plate of mail at his knees. Twice was he in the Holy Land, for in 1240 he went on crusade with Earl Richard of Cornwall, and in 1247, after an interview with the Pope, he led the English Crusaders with his mother's blessing (she was Abbess of Lacock then) and "took a tower full of Saracen ladies and treasure"; and at last fell with his English, overwhelmed by numbers. It is said in that last stand the Count of Artois cried out to him to flee, but he, standing his ground, answered "please God, my father's son will not flee for any Saracen." His mother Ela, as she sat in her stall at Lacock, is said to have seen him enter heaven "in full armour." In England he was long reckoned a martyr.

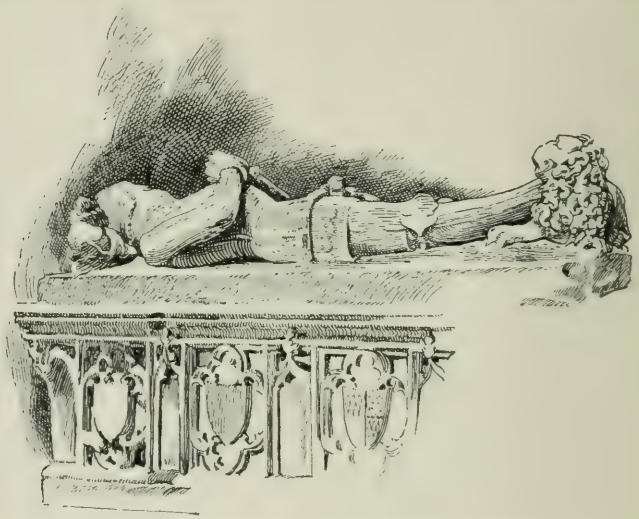
We know nothing of the next two tombs, but that beyond them, on the long parapet, is that of Sir John de Montacute (d. 1389), the younger son of the first of this family to hold the Earldom of Salisbury. He was at Cressy and his son succeeded to the earldom. His effigy is a fine specimen of the work of the period and is interesting in its representation of armour.

Beyond this tomb Wyatt placed the supposed tomb of St. Osmund; a more decent reverence has placed it in the Choir Chapel Aisle. The brassless tombs beyond this place are those of Walter Lord Hungerford and his wife. Beyond them is the monument of Sir John Cheyney (d. 1509). The effigy even so late wears the SS collar and the badge of Henry VII. Sir John Cheyney was a giant and acted as a standard bearer to Henry of Richmond on Bosworth field, when the white rose of England turned red. He was unhorsed by Richard III. in the dreadful last charge.

Turning now to the western transepts, one passes under

[1] It will be seen there is here no mention of Mass. Perhaps it was unusual for the Boy Bishop to officiate at the most solemn rite of the Church but that he did so in some places we know. At Eton College on St. Nicholas' Day the Boy Bishop officiated at Mass, which he began and went on with up to the most solemn part of the Offertory.

the perpendicular arches, inserted here to support the weight of the spire in the fifteenth century, to find the triforium and clerestory continued round them. The elaborate roof overhead is of the sixteenth century. The only ancient monument in the north transept stands against the north wall and is a work of the first years of the sixteenth century. Its mutilated effigy probably represents Bishop Blyth (d. 1499). Another with a canopy partly in the choir aisle is generally said to be the tomb of Bishop Woodville (d. 1484). Here, too, are monuments, three by Flaxman, to Sir R. C. Hoare and others, and



Sir John de Montacute's Tomb in Salisbury Cathedral.

on the west wall is a bust commemorating Richard Jefferies. From this transept it is possible to ascend to the tower, and it is well worth the fatigue of doing so, for, apart from the interest afforded by the architecture, the views to be had are magnificent.

In the south transept there is but one monument of pre-Reformation date, a fine altar tomb with effigy of Bishop Mitford (d. 1407). It is among the lovely things of the church. *Honor Deo et gloria* you read there, the birds hold it up written on a

scroll, and indeed is it not ever their song? A monument to Lord Chief Justice Hyde, cousin of Lord Clarendon, stands against the west wall here. The grisaille glass in this transept in the upper lights of the south windows is of the thirteenth century.

One now passes into the choir through the light screen of brass which Scott designed. It took the place of Wyatt's screen, erected out of fragments of the Hungerford and Beauchamp chantries he had destroyed. Of the medieval screen, a thing beyond our dreams, I shall speak by and by. The choir is as fine as the nave in its architecture, but in its ornaments is wholly modern. Only the stalls are in part ancient and the chantry of Bishop Audley (d. 1524), which still remains in its original position, a fine mutilated example of late Perpendicular work (1520). Opposite is the chantry of Walter Lord Hungerford (1429) which was removed from the nave where it stood in 1778 and converted by the Earl of Radnor, with a vandalism almost touching in its sense of the value of property, into his family pew. Such it remains, bedizened, gilded, and emblazoned. It must once have been a noble, if severe, example of the ironwork of the time. Next it is a somewhat amorphous fourteenth century monument. Of Sir Gilbert Scott's altar and reredos there is no need to speak. The roof decorations are said to be reproductions of the thirteenth century work.

Here in the sanctuary, as we might expect upon the Gospel side of the altar, is the tomb and effigy said to be that of Bishop Poore, the founder of the church. Wyatt removed it from this place, but it has been restored. The effigy in Purbeck is beautiful and certainly of the time; over the central arch of the canopy is an angel supporting the sun and moon.

Behind the choir lies the ambulatory, or low eastern aisle, beyond which opens the Lady Chapel. This part of the church has much beauty, but cannot for a moment compare with the miracle worked at Wells. All here, as there, is upheld by slender clustered shafts of Purbeck, but without the magic of the Somersetshire church: and were all far finer than it is, it would be completely ruined by the dreadful glass and decoration which make it almost impossible to linger here. The reredos is in part a reconstruction from broken fragments of the altarpiece of the Beauchamp chapel (1481) and the Hungerford Chapel (1470). Here, after 1456, when St. Osmund was canon-

ised, stood his magnificent shrine. On the north side of the altar lies, among others of her house, the Countess of Pembroke (1621).

"The glory of all verse
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother."

Wyatt, as we have seen, is answerable for more destruction here at Salisbury than the Reformation and the Civil War; they at least spared the two lovely chapels on either side of the Lady Chapel: the Hungerford Chapel to the north, the Beauchamp Chapel to the south. They were both works of the later Perpendicular period and nothing can make up to us for their loss.

Turning now into the north choir aisle and passing the Jacobean monument of Sir Thomas and Lady Helen Gorges of Longford Castle, one comes upon the memorial slab to St. Osmund, removed from the nave where Wyatt had placed it. Close by is the tomb perhaps of Bishop Roger (d. 1139). It is said to stand on another tomb, that of Bishop Longespée (d. 1396), son of the second Longespée who lies in the nave. Here, too, in the same aisle, west of the Audley Chapel, is the tomb as it is said of Bishop Bingham (d. 1246); a lovely thing, but surely later than the middle of the thirteenth century.

The beautiful north-east transept, across the entrance to which an inverted arch, something like those at Wells, has been built, is worth most careful and loving inspection. Just within the entrance is a brass to Bishop de Wyvel (d. 1375) whose chief glory is the spire of his cathedral. It is not this great work which is commemorated here, however, but the recovery of the castle of Sherborne, of which Stephen had deprived Bishop Roger. The question of possession was decided in the lists as we see on the brass, one of the finest in the county. Close to the memorial of these great Catholic prelates are the gravestones of the first Reformation Bishops to fill the see, Bishop Jewel (d. 1571) and Bishop Gheast (d. 1576).

Nothing else in the transept is, however, to be compared for interest and beauty with the marvellously lovely screen, removed from the entrance to the choir by Wyatt. The beautiful sculptured heads still bear traces of colour and the whole work is beyond praise; it remains for ever in the memory. It is such things as these that demand answers

to many questions the modern Englishman refuses to consider with sincerity.

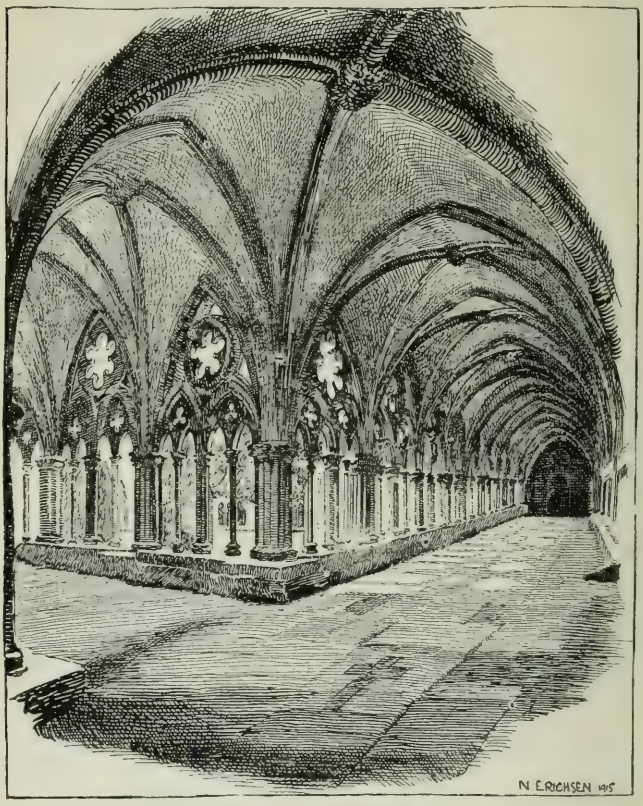
One returns sadly on one's way, and passing the Lady Chapel, again enters the south choir aisle, beside the great monument of the Earl of Hertford (d. 1621) whom Queen Elizabeth separated from his wife, the sister of Lady Jane Grey. Close by is the altar tomb of William Wilton, Chancellor of Sarum (d. 1523); the heraldry is excellent. Further is the lovely canopied monument of Bishop Giles de Bridport (d. 1262) who finished the church begun by Bishop Poore. After the tomb of the Earl of Salisbury it is easily the finest monument in the church and it would be hard to discover a finer anywhere else in southern England. The sculpture is exquisite, the Early English face of the bishop beautiful in its repose.

The transept here contains no work of art worth notice; but the octagonal muniment room, entered from it, should perhaps be visited.

Returning now out of the choir, one comes into the south-west transept and thence passes into the cloister. This is of later date than the church, but is among the loveliest things of the sort in England, lying all about its paradise with its cedars and greensward.

The windows with their lovely tracery are of an extraordinary beauty, and the play of light and shadow incomparable. For the most part the capitals of the columns are moulded, but at the angles the capitals are wonderfully enriched with carving. Behind the northern walk, between it and the church, is the curious rectangular court called the Plumbery. Above the eastern walk is the Library, begun in 1559 by Bishop Jewel, and finished in 1571 by Bishop Gheast, his successor. Here, too, from the east walk, one reaches the Chapter House, slightly later and of great beauty. A great octagonal building, entered by a most lovely door, from which, alas! the statue is missing, it has an interior diameter of 58 feet; it is a casket of light upheld by a single column in the midst from which the vaulting ribs all spring. Lovely as it is the Salisbury Chapter House compares well even with that at Wells and with that at Westminster. In one thing only can it be said to outshine the Wells Chapter House and that is in its thirteenth century sculpture. A frieze, as it were, of this runs round the building over the arcade, filling the spandrels under the glorious

windows. Restored though they are, these reliefs are altogether captivating in their loveliness and we have only to look at such a subject as the Joseph and Potiphar's wife to be caught alto-



Cloisters, Salisbury Cathedral.

gether by their free spirit. In them the world grows young again. They are surely among the most interesting things of the kind in all broad England. But all the work here was once as lovely as they. A shadow of it remains still, *Deo gratias*. Beside the central post is a curious table or circular seat.

By a door in the south walk of the cloister it is possible to reach the Bishop's Palace, a long, picturesque line of buildings of various dates, with a fine old gateway tower to the north-east. The palace runs east and west, but very irregularly, and bears witness everywhere to its long history. It consists really of three main parts, the hall and chamber on the west, which were originally built by Bishop Poore in 1221 and were co-eval with the Lady Chapel, the earliest part of the Cathedral; the old dining hall, now the entrance hall, with the chapel above



The Bishop's Palace, Salisbury.

it on the north, the work it might seem of Bishop Beauchamp (1450–81); and the hall and tower on the east which no one can doubt we owe to that prelate.

Among the more recent parts of the house is the Library built by Bishops Seth Ward (1666–88) and Sherlock (1724–48), which Bishop Barrington characteristically turned into a dining-room when he spent some £7,000 on the place, chiefly in adding bedrooms; so that where one room had sufficed for Bishop Poore, the builder of the church, twenty or more were not enough for its destroyer.

A tablet in the present entrance sets out in the Latin tongue the chief facts in the history of the palace. It is there truly

asserted that Bishop Poore was the founder, but it is only in late years that documents have been found to confirm this tradition. Two Close Rolls are quoted by the late Bishop Wordsworth,[1] each dated 1221, showing that in that year the king granted Bishop Poore timber from the Royal forests for the palace at Salisbury. The first of the Rolls reads as follows: "The king to Peter de Malo-Lacu health. Know that we have given to our venerable father, Richard Bishop of Salisbury, twenty couples (of beams) in our park of Gillingham to make his hall at New Sarum. And therefore we order you to let him have those twenty couples wherever he can most conveniently have them." The second is on similar terms; but speaks of a chamber instead of a hall. The hall is easily identified to-day as the great upper room over an undercroft fifty-four feet by twenty-four feet, now used as a drawing room, and certainly the noblest room in Sarum. This was of course the chief building, where Bishop Poore entertained Henry III. The chamber spoken of in the second document would seem to be the building to the south-west of the hall and at right angles to it. This was the bishop's private room and was used as a bedroom and reception room. The kitchen was not joined to the hall but stood separate, apparently on the site of the old kitchens to the south, parallel, that is, with the present entrance hall and chapel, and with a turret and staircase probably between it and the hall. These would seem to make up all the palace of Bishop Poore. We have a parallel to these buildings in the contemporary palace at Wells, though everything there was on a more princely scale; for instance, the undercroft of the hall at Salisbury is three bays long; at Wells there are seven bays.

I say these would seem to be all the buildings of the palace of Bishop Poore. If this is so the palace had no chapel. It may be, however, that a chapel existed, perhaps on the site of the present one, but the wing in which the chapel forms the upper storey to the north-east of the old hall and the drawing room was as we see it, save for the brutal additions of Bishop Barrington, the work perhaps of Bishop Beauchamp (1450–81). He seems to have built the great hall, now the entrance hall, with the chapel over it, but the work here differs so greatly from the great eastern hall and tower, which are undoubtedly

[1] See *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xxv. 167.

his work, that there seems to be reason to think he may only have remodelled here a work of his predecessor. At any rate the present entrance hall and chapel were not built earlier than 1425. The great hall, which we know Bishop Beauchamp to have built, stands behind the tower, also his work, and forms the eastern wing of the palace. Curiously enough the tower remains practically intact, but the hall was much ruined in the time of the Great Rebellion, when the Puritans sold the palace to a Dutch tailor, who turned part of it into an inn, and let out the rest in tenements, so that we shall never know what it originally looked like.

It was in this palace, and I think it is the most memorable scene the place recalls, that after William of Orange, landed at Torbay, King James II. took up his abode, the uninvited guest of Bishop Seth Ward. With him were the meanest traitors in English history, Churchill and his friends, "the King's advisors." There they hatched the "Warminster plot," and only just failed of their purpose. The king, urged by them, was to go to Warminster accompanied by Churchill, and there he would hand him over to the enemy, and if anything threatened on the way Churchill was prepared to stab his master with his dagger. James, however, was taken ill and never went to Warminster. When he got better he set out for Andover, and three weeks later William of Orange was in occupation of the palace. One would wish to know what part Bishop Seth Ward played amid all this damnable treason.

The most delightful thing about a visit to the palace, which has not the interest of that at Wells, is the very noble view it affords not only of the Chapter House, but of the whole range of the Cathedral. That view is not only noble but unique, and gives almost a French impression difficult to appreciate too highly.

The Close was in fact a cemetery till Bishop Barrington laid out the present lawns. It is a place of the most characteristic English beauty, its trees, its lawns, its enclosed and quiet loveliness, its glorious church and fine old houses, so retiring and withdrawn, make up a citadel of long established peace only to be found in England. It would seem that such a precinct had always surrounded the Cathedral, but apparently it was not till the year 1331, when Robert de Wyvile had been

two years bishop, that it was properly walled with stone. Permission to fortify the *clausum ecclesiae* had been granted by Edward III. in 1327, and in the year 1331, the king at Sherborne issued a letter patent as follows:—"Know ye, etc., that we have lately conceded to the reverend father, Robert, bishop of Sarum and our beloved in Christ the dean and chapter of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Sarum all the stone walls of the former Cathedral church of Old Sarum, and the houses which lately belonged to the bishop and canons of the said church within our castle of Old Sarum to have and to hold as our gift for the improvement of the church of New Sarum and the Close thereunto belonging . . . ." Part of the walls and all the gate-houses still remain. These gates are four in number. Upon the north is the North or Close or Cemetery or High Street gate, the gate into the city, with the fine College of Matrons, a building, perhaps by Wren, within it; upon the east is St. Anne's gate; upon the south Harnham gate, and upon the south-east the Bishop's gate. It is curious that only one of these gates should bear the name of a Saint and it requires perhaps a certain ingenuity to explain the dedication in honour of St. Anne. But St. Anne's gate stood to the east near the Lady Chapel, and was as leading to it perhaps dedicated with the chapel over it to the mother of the Blessed Virgin. This was the chapel of the vicar's choral, who lived in the Vicar's College, now divided into several houses, close by.

Within these ancient gates the whole Close is as full of interest as it is of beauty, it abounds in noble old houses which may rather be divined than seen, but each one of which is worth a visit; the Deanery [1] irregular but charming, of which Coventry Patmore sings, facing the west front of the cathedral; the ancient King's House, a gabled building of the fourteenth century; south of it the Wardrobe House, beyond the north canonry, to the north, a fine work of the fifteenth century; with Leden Hall to the south, beyond the King's House, while

[1] It was a Dean of Sarum, a great and devoted friend of Henry V., who added the petition to the Sarum liturgy when the King was at the wars: "That it may please Thee to be his Defender and Keeper, giving him the victory over all his enemies." Cranmer took this over, and it stands in the "Book of Common Prayer" to this day. It was another Dean who translated the four Gospels into Latin hexameters, an even more grotesque business than that of the Wiltshireman who translated *Paradise Lost* into the same tongue and the same metre.

Elias de Dereham is said himself to have built the two gabled buildings at the corner towards St. Anne's gate; and then to



St. Anne's Gate, Salisbury.

the north and east of the Choristers' square, Mompesson House, with its fine gates and the Matron's College. All must be seen, but especially the King's House. Thence as it is said, Richard III.

set out for Bosworth field. The place is now a college for women-teachers and from it Sue Bridehead, Jude's Sue, who was married in St. Thomas' church here in Sarum, made her escape, wading over the Avon, in Mr. Hardy's unforgettable novel. This training college in its newer part stands upon the site of the ancient Sub-Chantry House, the house that is of the succentor of the Cathedral. It stood as we see between the King's House and the Deanery. It must now be numbered with the Bell Tower and the two chapels, at the eastern end of the Cathedral, as one of the medieval buildings in the close which are lost to us. The close remains. By a miracle perhaps of love, perhaps of incredible good fortune, that wonderful half secret place, spellbound as it might seem, withdrawn, full of the "twilight of grey Gothic things," and yet so warm with the sun, lovely with trees whispering with the gentle wind, incomparable and beyond our desert dear and unmatched, is left to us, a priceless possession, one of the chief glories of England. Not Manchester, not Sheffield, but Sarum close shall stand for England, for the England of our hearts. Not in those dreary prisons of the north, but here our treasure is, ah, if we but knew it, and where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also.

II

The city of Salisbury, as has been seen, was like Wells, entirely ecclesiastical in its origin, yet unlike Wells it came to have a great secular importance and to be the capital of the county in which it lies. Largely, of course, this was due to its geographical position; it seems to focus all the plain and its valleys, and to gather to itself as of right all the wealth and all the energy of that far-stretched and difficult country.

Even before Bishop Poore decided to remove the See from Old Sarum and set about it, "there was," as Leland says, "a village at *Fisherton* over Avon or ever *New-Saresbyri* was builded and had a paroche chirche there, as it hath yet." Fisherton, which is mentioned in Domesday Book, is thus the oldest part of Sarum, and its old church, now pulled down,

was in a sense the mother church of the place. Harnham Bridge, too, we read, "was a village afore the erection of New Saresbyri, and there was a church of St. Martine longging to it." In West Harnham we have to-day a very interesting, though restored church, but not of St. Martin, far older than anything Salisbury itself can boast, for it possesses a good Norman door on the north, as well as an Early English chancel arch, and an early font.

However, neither Fisherton nor Harnham had much to do with the foundation of Sarum, and it was to a wholly new and virginal city but seven years old that Henry III. granted a charter in 1227, making it a free city as we have seen with the same privileges and immunities as Winchester enjoyed, and this charter was confirmed anew by Edward I. in 1278. Old Sarum fast declined before the new city. This according to Leland was due to the fact that "Licens was got of the king by a bishop of *Saresbyri* to turn the Kingges Highway to New *Saresbyri* and to make a mayne bridge of right passage over *Avon* at *Harnham*. The chaunging of this way was the totale cause of the ruine of *Old Saresbyri* and *Wiltoun*. For afore this Wiltoun had a 12 paroch chirches or more and was the hedde town of *Wileshir*."

The turning of the king's highway to which Leland attributed so great results took place in 1244 and was the work of Bishop Bingham, to whose successor Giles of Bridport Leland ascribes the building of "the fair stone bridge called Harnham at Saresbyri."[1] This work was, however, but a result of the king's grant of a market. It was the market that brought wealth to Sarum as much as the Cathedral, and it is as an episcopal and a market town that it has flourished ever since the thirteenth century. In 1295 it first sent members to Parliament. In 1310 it began to defend itself first with a deep fosse on the north and north-east, where it was not defended by the rivers, then in 1367 and again in 1372 it obtained leave to fortify itself, Bishop Wyvile giving leave to erect a rampart and four gates. Long before then, however, the importance of the new city had become manifest, as a great station on the western

[1] Bishop Bingham built a stone bridge over the main channel of the Avon and carried it also over the lesser channel. On the island on the east side of the bridge he built a chapel in honour of St. John Baptist. *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xxv 122.

road. In 1289 commissioners had met there to arrange a match between Prince Edward and Princess Margaret of Scotland, the "Maid of Norway"; in 1297 a parliament of Barons of the realm was held there, as again in 1384 when the Duke of Lancaster was accused by a Carmelite Friar of a design to kill Richard II. Salisbury was indeed hostile to Richard, it espoused the cause of Henry Bolingbroke and was thanked by him for its support when he became Henry IV. Henry VI. visited the city in 1434 and 1438, and his queen in 1455, when all the citizens were ordered to wear "a good gown of blood colour and a red hood." But the most famous event of the fifteenth century in Salisbury was undoubtedly the execution there of the Duke of Buckingham, who as Richard ordered:

> —"Someone take order Buckingham be brought
> To Salisbury. . . ."—

was brought here from Shrewsbury where he had been arrested and without trial or arraignment, for he had been taken in arms, "was in the open market-place, on a new scaffold, put to death." It is said that he was buried at the Grey Friars in London, but the Salisbury people have it that a headless skeleton found buried beneath the kitchen of the Saracen's Head—once the Blue Boar Inn—was his, and that he was hastily buried there almost on the site of his execution. Buckingham's brother-in-law, Lionel Woodville, was then Bishop of Sarum; he died in the following year.

The growing importance of Salisbury at this time is fully attested by the frequent visits of the reigning sovereign. In 1491 and 1496 Henry VII. was there; in 1535 Henry VIII. and Anne Boleyn; in 1551 Edward VI. In 1556 three men were burnt as heretics in Fisherton field; this was in Queen Mary's time. The place, indeed, was Protestant and Elizabeth had a royal welcome there in 1574, on her way to Bristol, when the city presented to her "a cup of gold and 20 pounds in gold, whereat her Majesty was both merry and pleasant." A similar gift, only the cup was of silver, was made to James I. in 1603. When King James was at Salisbury in 1618, Sir Walter Raleigh, a prisoner at last, was in the town on his way to London, in charge of Stukeley. The greatest man in England, the victim of a Scotch King and the Spanish ambassador, had contrived to delay his departure by feigning illness and even madness,

but on the arrival of James I. Stukeley was ordered to proceed at once, and Raleigh was forthwith conveyed to London. In the few days he gained at Salisbury, he had managed to write his "Apologie for the voyage to Guiana," his formal defence of his actions.

James I., like most of his Protestant predecessors, since he was supreme head of the Church of England, had been used to occupy the palace on his visits to Sarum. But in 1625, when Charles I. was king and Laud Archbishop, Bishop Davenant of Sarum refused to resign his palace when the king entered the city and his majesty moved on to Wilton. It is probable that Salisbury was, like most other cities in the south, much divided in feeling and opinion during the great rebellion. It was occupied by both parties alternately, by Ludlow, by Doddington, by Waller, and, lastly, by the king and Prince Maurice. In 1645, Ludlow had held the close against Sir Marmaduke Langdale, and a fight occurred in the market place, which lasted some hours, but in October of that year Cromwell himself appeared and the royal cause in Sarum was lost.

Charles II. was near Sarum after Worcester, in hiding for some days, and at the King's Arms, within the city, his friends used to meet to plan his escape. That the city was hostile to the royal cause was made plain, however, in 1655, when Penruddocke entered Sarum and proclaimed the king, but met with nothing but sour looks; he was soon after taken and executed. Sarum, alas! kept its smiles for the Dutchman, who on December 4th, 1688, entered the city "with the same military pomp he had displayed at Exeter, and was lodged in the palace James had occupied but a few days before."

It is pleasing to turn from this affair to the city itself, its churches and inns and houses, and the memory of those cloisters it has, alas! irretrievably lost. Leland's description of the city in the early part of the sixteenth century cannot be bettered. "Ther be many fair streates in the Cite *Saresbyri* and especially the High Streate and the Castel Streate so caullid because it lyith as a way to the castelle of *Old Saresbyry*. All the streates in a maner of New *Saresbyri* hath little streamlettes and armes derivyd out of *Avon* that rennith through them. The site of the very toun of *Saresbyri* and much ground therabout is playne and low, and as a pan or receyver of most

parte of the water of *Wyleshire*.[1] The market-place in *Saresbyri* is fair and large, and welle waterid with a renning stremelet; in a corner of it is *domus civica* no very curious pece of work, but strongly builded of stone[2] . . . . Ther be but two paroche chirches in the Cyte of *Saresbyri* whereof the one ys by the market-place as in the hart of the toun and is dedicate to St. *Thomas*. The other is St. *Edmunde* and is a Collegiate Chirch of the foundation of *De la Wyle*, Bishop of *Saresbyry*. He erected the college of St. *Edmund*. *Nicolaus de St. Quintino* was first Provost of St. *Edmunde's* and lyith buried there."

Of the church of St. Edmund, built by Bishop Wyle (1263–71), not a stone remains, I suppose. But the church which stood there in the seventeenth century was destroyed so far as the nave was concerned by the fall of the tower in 1653. The chancel remained and has now been restored out of all recognition as the nave of a new church built by Scott. The college for secular priests, dedicated like the church in honour of St. Edmund of Abingdon, has also perished, and in 1660 its site was bought by the Wyndhams. A new college has been built there, its only interest for us being that in the grounds now stands the old north transept porch of the cathedral which Wyatt pulled down.

The mother church of the city of Sarum was that of St. Thomas, and this happily remains to us. It stands between the High Street and the Market Place, and is dedicated not to the apostle but to the English martyr St. Thomas Becket of Canterbury, for it was founded possibly in the very year 1220, in which the body of that great saint was translated from the crypt of Canterbury to the chapel that had been built for it, where it remained till the Reformation. The year 1220 was the year of the foundation of the Cathedral of Sarum, and therefore I suppose of the foundation of the parish church, but we cannot be sure of this. What we see to-day is a late Perpendicular building for the most part, but closer inspection reveals something of the early date of the church. The earliest record we have of the church of St. Thomas in Sarum is in the year 1238. It is then referred to as the Chapel of St. Thomas

[1] Bishop Douglas (1791–1807) used to say "Salisbury is the sink of the Plain: the Close is the sink of Salisbury: the Palace the sink of the Close." This, if ever true, has now been remedied.

[2] The old Guildhall, long since destroyed, illustrated in Hall's *Salisbury*.

of Canterbury, and must have been a small building probably cruciform in shape, consisting of nave, chancel and transepts.



Church of St. Thomas of Canterbury, Salisbury.

The choir, as we know, was 40 feet 4 inches long and does not seem to have been in any way separated from the nave. For all intents and purposes we may regard the chapel of St. Thomas

as contemporary with the Cathedral, and like it an Early English work lighted by lancet windows. It was originally without chapels or aisles, but presently a chapel dedicated in honour of St. Stephen was added to it upon the south-east. This chapel was under repair, if not rebuilt, in 1410, and was probably founded before the end of the thirteenth century. In the latter half of the fourteenth century another chapel was built to the north-east of the church and was known as Godmanstone's chapel. Not much later we hear of the chantry of St. Bartholomew in St. Thomas's church. In the year 1400 the tower we see seems to have been built, and then in 1447 the chancel fell down, and with it the chapel of St. Stephen, and was, at the entreaty of the parishioners, who agreed to assist, rebuilt, on a larger scale, much as we have it, by the Dean and Chapter, who as rectors were obliged to keep the chancel in repair. Two years later we find William Swayne, mayor of Salisbury, and patron of the Tailors' Guild, building at his own cost the south aisle of the new chancel as a guild chapel, and founding in this chapel two chantries, one in honour of the Blessed Virgin and the other of St. John Baptist. The ornaments and glass of this chapel were destroyed at the Reformation (1548). Some traces of the paintings remain, especially those of the Annunciation, the Visitation, and the Nativity of Our Lord in the spandrels of the arches; they seem to represent the first three of the five joyful mysteries of the Rosary of Our Lady. The roof is still very lovely, the beams being ornamented with shields bearing the emblems of the Passion, the symbol of the Blessed Trinity, and the arms of William Swayne, the founder, with the inscriptions in Latin: "Pray for the soul of James father of William Swayne," and "Pray for the souls of William Swayne and Chrystian his wife." The alabaster tombs now there have nothing to do with the chapel. Of old they stood in the choir.

To return to the story of the church: towards the end of the fifteenth century the old nave was given aisles and a south and north porch were built, and a little later the nave was heightened, the clerestory built with the west window and all covered with a beautiful carved roof. Then the great picture of the "Last Judgment" was painted over the chancel arch. This work, though not unique, is of the utmost interest. It is said to have been commissioned by a pilgrim to commemorate his

safe return home, and the two large figures represent the donor and St. Osmund, who was then but newly canonised (1457). In 1573, at the change of religion, this Doom was covered with whitewash, and the arms of Elizabeth placed over all. These arms remained above the arch till 1880, when the painting was uncovered. The south porch also showed (1905) traces of painting which could not be preserved. The north porch was destroyed in 1835. It had a room over it, where of old, so it is said, an anchorite used to dwell.

The church in so far as its ornaments are concerned, as we see, suffered grievously at the change of religion. Its rood and loft were taken down (1559) and its organ destroyed. Most of the glass throughout the church was smashed up. A little, however, escaped, and may be seen now in the north window of the Godmanstone aisle and in the east window. These fragments date from the time of Edward III. Other pieces may be found in the curious three-storeyed vestry where in the small room, once an oratory, in the fifteenth century window of three lights are good fragments of the glass of that period; a St. Christopher with Our Lord on his shoulder, St. Thomas of Canterbury, a mutilated figure in benediction and other pieces. The old pulpit of the church was destroyed in 1877. The great altar tomb of Purbeck marble in the Godmanstone aisle originally stood under the central arch to the north of the choir. It was the tomb of one of the founders of the two Godmanstone chantries and bore brass effigies and symbols. These were stripped off either during the change of religion or in the Great Rebellion, and in 1727 a certain Thomas Chaffin appropriated the tomb and set his name and his grandfather's thereon.

The most curious thing left in this beautiful church is the old font, a plain bowl of late Norman style. This seems to point to an earlier foundation than 1220; but we have no other hint of it.[1]

Leland mentions a church older than either St. Thomas' or St. Edmund's. It did not stand, if Leland is right, in the city, but in the village of Harnham, which was before Sarum was founded. "Harnham Bridge," says he, "was a village

[1] See *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xxxvi. 1, and *St. Thomas's Church* by Edmund Hoyle (Journal Office, Sarum, n.d.). Here, in St. Thomas' with its Doom, Sue Bridehead was married ("Jude the Obscure," by Thomas Hardy, Bk. iii. Chap. vii.).

long afore the erection of New Saresbyri ; and there was a church of St. Martine longging to it. There standith now of the remain of the old chirch of S. *Martin*, a barne in a very low medow on the north side of St. *Nicolas* Hospital. The cause of the relinquisching of it was the moysteness of the ground often overflowen. For this chirch was ther a new, dedicate to S. *Martine* in a nother place that yet standith."

St. Martin's now stands on a hill at the south-eastern extremity of the city ; where it originally stood we do not know, and it might seem now impossible to say.[1] The style of the present church would seem to suggest that it was built in the fourteenth century, but the chancel may be earlier, and the font, which is of course no evidence for the church we see, is certainly of Norman date. The windows of the aisles are of the fifteenth century. The whole church is interesting, but as we see it would appear to date after the foundation of St. Thomas', and this is confirmed by the fact that St. Thomas' is the mother church of Sarum.

If it is with a certain disappointment we examine the old churches of Salisbury, we must forgo altogether any hope we may have of the religious houses ; nothing remains of any one of them. The city was always poor in them ; it boasted no monastic establishment of any kind and only two Friaries ; a house of Grey Friars and a house of Black Friars at Fisherton. The Black Friars, the Dominicans that is, were, it seems, the first to come, settling at Wilton about 1245, and later transferring their chief establishment to Salisbury, where in the end of 1280 they settled at Fisherton-Anger not far from Fisherton Bridge. Thither, also about the same time, came the Grey Friars, the Friars Minor or Franciscans. We know almost nothing of these convents.[2] In 1538 they were visited on behalf of Cromwell by Bishop Ingworth, himself a Dominican. He reported that all was well. This was not what the destroyer wanted, and Ingworth was forced to accept the surrender of the Black Friars of Sarum in October. This involved the fall of the older but now dependent house of Wilton. With the Dominicans fell the Franciscans. Their houses were sold, and Sir William Herbert and John Wroth respectively enjoyed what for so long the friars held in trust for God and the poor.

[1] See *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xxxiv. 351.
[2] See *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xvii. 165.

A fate somewhat less cruel was reserved for the ancient hospitals. There were two of these in Sarum, which in some sort remain, of which, that of St. Nicholas was probably older than the city, while that of Holy Trinity was founded, in 1379, by one Agnes Bottenham, on a spot where a house of evil repute had existed. Its foundation deed tells us that "the founders by inspiration of the Holy Ghost have ordained thirty beds for the support of the poor . . . . the hungry are fed, the thirsty have drink, the naked are clothed, the sick comforted, the dead buried, the mad kept safe till restored, orphans and widows nourished and lying-in women cared for till churched."

We know nothing of the foundation of the hospital of St. Nicholas at Harnham Bridge. We hear of it first in 1227, but Bishop Bingham when he built the double stone bridge over the ford there, as I have related, in 1244, speaks of a *Locus hospitalis*, which he pulled down, building all anew. That old hospital stood on the north bank beside the ford over the Avon by which the road passed north and south, and was about a mile from the new city of Sarum. It was a house for poor wayfarers.

Leland asserts, surely wrongly, that it was a foundation of Bishop Poore's, but the first deed of gift we know anything of is dated August, 1227, and is signed by Ela, Countess of Salisbury, who makes gifts for the repose of her soul and that of her husband, the great Longespée. Only the second deed, dated September of the same year, is signed by Bishop Poore.

Then in 1244 comes Bishop Bingham the bridge builder. He built Harnham Bridge, founded on the island to the west the chapel of St. John Baptist, of which I have spoken, and rebuilt the hospital to the north of the stream. In May of that year the Bishop makes both bridge and chapel over to the Dean and Chapter, appointing the subdean Nicholas Laking first warden of the new hospital of St. Nicholas, and Walter De Wylye, afterwards bishop, first warden of the bridge. But in 1245 the bishop changed his mind and placed all, bridge, hospital and chapel, in the care of Nicholas Laking with three priests to help him: two of them to lodge at the hospital, and all four to eat there, "and to be clothed alike in a russet coat closed round the throat and to keep step together." These priests had onerous duties of service to God and man, they had to say their Office, to say Mass, and to visit the sick, to

confess penitents and to bury the dead, and especially is the warden bound to serve the chapel of St. Nicholas as though he were at the Cathedral.

More than we might expect of what Bishop Bingham then built and established is still standing; something at least of the chapel of St. John by the bridge with its triple lancet window and the hospital of "Christ's poor and weak and infirm," who were ministered to by "Brothers and Sisters" of the hospital as well as spiritually served by the priest. The buildings we see stand between the south wall of the close and Harnham Bridge. They form three sides of a quadrangle and the oldest parts are the offices to the east, the chapel and chaplain's house to the south; on the north are the apartments of the twelve inmates. Part of the chaplain's dwelling belonged to the old church, as we may still see. Taking all together, with the bridge, it would be difficult to find a more picturesque or interesting work.

But the work of Bishop Bingham was not to go untouched. In 1261 Bishop Giles Bridport had used it to favour a scheme of his own. He established himself and his successor as the perpetual wardens of St. Nicholas Hospital, and set about founding a house in connection with it called *De Valle Scholarum Beati Nicholai* or College de Vaux; in other words, he established here a theological college, which in imitation of what had been done in France was to oppose the new learning of the Friars and the scholastic philosophy.[1] How curious and full of irony this is. For Bishop Giles not only destroyed the constitution of Bishop Bingham's foundation, but used it to destroy the friars whom his predecessor had founded and established at Wilton. Thus was the college of the Valley-Scholars of St. Nicholas founded in the meadows by the Cathedral, in connection with the hospital, though of the relations of the two institutions we know nothing. At the dissolution of the religious houses, however, in 1535, the college and the chapel of St. John fell; the hospital in some sort remained, saved apparently by the devotion of its master, Dr. Crayford, as it was again later by another master, Geoffrey Bigge.

One turns at last from these medieval religious buildings, all that remains to us of those in Salisbury before the change

[1] See Article by Rev. Canon Moberley, *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xxv. 119 *et seq.*

of religion, to the city itself, whose centre is the picturesque fourteenth century Poultry Cross and the Market Place behind it, which is now almost entirely devoid of any relic of antiquity.

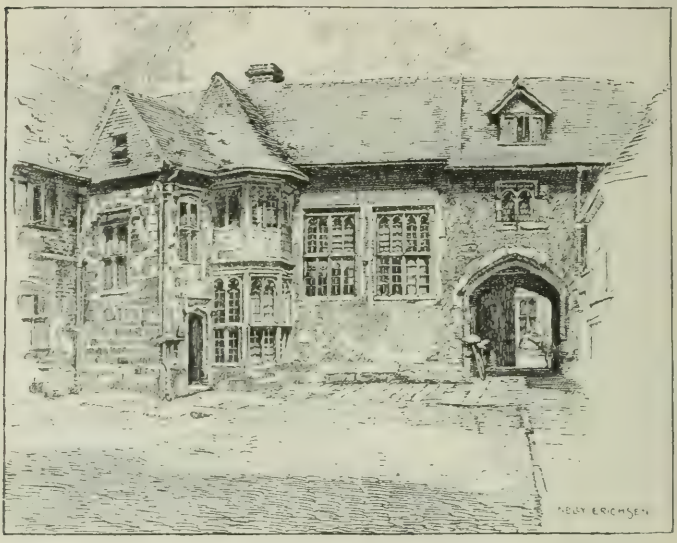
The "Poultry Cross," which, if, as surely it does, its name comes from Poletria—has nothing to do with fowls but rather with horses,[1] is an open hexagon, buttressed by six heavy piers, and upheld by a central pillar, square below, hexagonal above, about which are half figures of angels bearing shields; the whole has been repaired but is fairly well preserved.

The Market Place is spacious, and should be seen in all its liveliness on a market day when the city is full of country folk who have driven in by cart and carrier's van from the Plain. It is then that the truth about Sarum is manifest; she is the metropolis of all southern Wiltshire, of all that vast Down country with its many valleys that lies south of the Vale of Pewsey. Upon such a day the city is at its best; but it is curious that the lively English crowd, so cheerful and yet so sober withal, altogether avoids the Cathedral, which is then, as always, undisturbed in its magical icy silence. This surely is the chief difference, if not the only one, between Sarum to-day and Sarum in, say, the fifteenth century. Then the Cathedral would have been thronged, the shrine of St. Osmund all surrounded with worshippers, the lofty nave filled with a multitude that gave it all its meaning. But to-day the feet which tread those aisles are not those of the Wiltshire peasant. He avoids the place, it frightens him, it seems to him to belong to the gentry, and though the doors stand open wide, never will he venture in. One such I met on a market-day, when I was last in Sarum. It was in the afternoon. He came slowly picking his way, as it were, down the broad path towards the beautiful north porch, slowly and hesitatingly, and often looking about him. Evidently the building attracted him; perhaps some atavistic impulse drew him on: he came surely in the footsteps of his fathers. As I passed him he turned to me suddenly and in a half cunning, half shy whisper, demanded if it were lawful to enter. I told him yes, if he took off his cap, and watched him, still half afraid of his adventure, enter the shadow of the great doorway. I often wonder what he made of all that emptiness within.

The best of the old houses within the city of Salisbury, apart

[1] *Cf.* Dacange.

from those in the close, is to my mind that near Crane Bridge, called now the Church House, but of old Crane House or Audley House. It is a fine Perpendicular building, the house of one Webb, a cloth merchant, and has a large courtyard and garden within. More famous perhaps is the hall of John Halle by the market place, now the show room of a china shop. This, too, was built by a wool stapler about the same time (1470) as the Church House. It was his banqueting hall, and with



The Church House, Salisbury.

its furnishings is well worth a visit, as are the front of the Joiners' Hall in St. Anne Street and the Tailors' Hall at the end of the passage in Milford Street.

Nor should the old inns be neglected; indeed Salisbury is particularly rich in them. The best and the oldest of these is the George Inn in the High Street. "Ye Grate Inne of Ye George" was built about 1320, and though, of course, it has been added to from time to time, its bay windows, for instance, dating from 1453, and its fine oak staircase being Jacobean, it is structurally certainly still of the fourteenth century, in fact,

it is asserted that its oak beams were brought from Old Sarum where they had upheld the Inn of the Pilgrims to that city. The first mention we have of the inn we know is in the year 1401, and in 1473 we have a list of its principal chambers. In the sixteenth century the Strolling Players gave dramatic representations in the courtyard, and it is possible that Shakespeare has played there. In the seventeenth century we know that Oliver Cromwell slept at the George in October, 1645, and Pepys speaks of it, in his Diary: "Came to the George Inn where lay in a silk bed and very good diet. To supper then to bed . . . Thursday. Up and W. Hewer and I up and down the town, and find it a very brave place. The city great, I think greater than Hereford. But the Minster most admirable, as big, I think, and handsomer than Westminster, and a most large Close about it and houses for the officers thereof, and a fine palace for the Bishop . . . So home to dinner, and that being done, paid the reckoning which was so exorbitant that I was mad and resolved to trouble the mistress about it and get something for the poor and came away in that humour. £2 5s. 6d.—servants 1s. 6d.; poor 1s.; guide to Stones 2s.; poor woman in the street 1s.; ribbands 6d.; wash woman 1s.; sempstress for W. Hewer 2s.; lent W. Hewer 2s."

But if the Old George is the most interesting old inn in Sarum, it is not the only one. The White Hart in John Street is worth a visit, so is the King's Arms Inn and the Haunch of Venison, a humbler hostelry, is one of the oldest houses in Salisbury. It is in such places the true spirit of the old city seems still to linger, and in spite of our new fangled ways we recognise it and salute it as our own.

CHAPTER III

IN THE MEADS: BEMERTON AND WILTON

THERE is nothing certainly in all the county of Wiltshire half so fair as, nor any valley nor any sweep of the downland that may compare for beauty, quietness and delight with, Salisbury Meads—I mean those delicious meadows everywhere enriched by the double waters of the Wylye and Nadder, married at Wilton, everywhere shadowed by immemorial elms and silvery with willows pollarded along the stream, steeped in the quietness of endless mornings and late summer afternoons, filled with a delicious silence broken only by the lowing of lazy cattle up to the knees in water; the sound of Salisbury bells chiming the unhastening hours. There is a paradise that only England can claim—to wander idly there is pleasure enough, while the long past flows by with the meandering streams, and the beauty and quietness of the old time before us return as in a golden dream for our delight. Lying there on a summer day, on a Sunday afternoon, who does not think of George Herbert; and, if the bells call is it not to his church we go at Bemerton, unless, indeed, we wander back with him to Salisbury for the music of evensong? Or is it Sidney we meet by these quiet streams lying in the shadow of those lordly trees dreaming of Arcadia? He knew these ways for, at the end of the meads stands Wilton, the Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia indeed, which most of us will enjoy how much more than his curious book. Was it from here over the infinite downs he watched, "With how sad steps O Moon thou climbest the skies," and mused upon that miracle "When Nature made her chief work Stella's eyes"?[1]

[1] Aubrey tells us that "the Arcadia and the Daphne [the subjects of Sidney's muse] is about Verndítch, and hither and there romancy plaines and boscages did no doubt conduce to the heightening of his fancy. He lived

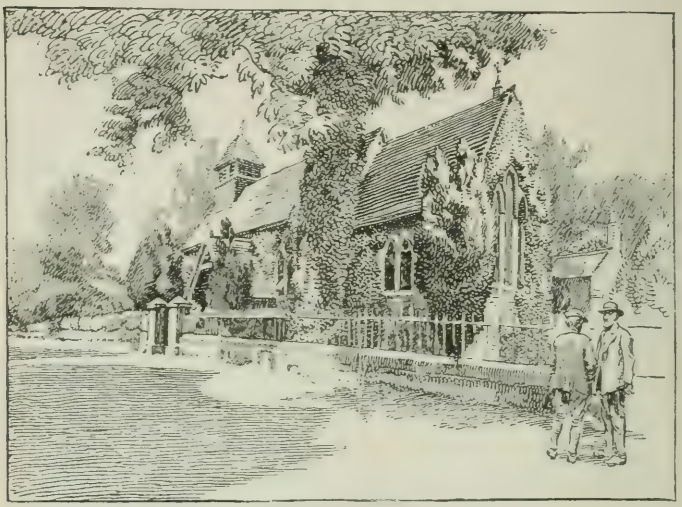
For most of us, whatever Wilton be, Bemerton remains, and will remain a holy place, one of the unmysterious shrines of England, on this side of the gulf, lovely and full of a sort of sunshine and courtesy, more sacred and certainly more sympathetic than Little Gidding; but a relic of the same moment of change and revolution, which a few noble and lovely spirits here in England were able to keep from utter meanness. This island of happiness lies on the northern confines of the meads of Sarum within sight of Salisbury spire, within sound of Sarum bells.

It must ever be reckoned to the glory and honour of the Church of England that she, alone of Protestant bodies, has been able to produce figures so full of a saintly courtesy as to confuse her enemies. It is significant, perhaps, that these figures are all aristocratic; they are nearer to St. Charles than to St. Francis—it is to say that they are among those unworldly types of character which the world is able to estimate. Of these George Herbert is perhaps the most perfect; at any rate he is the most national.

There might seem to be something in the English soul that suddenly, and at the most unlikely moments, blossoms with an exquisite, a courtly, and yet a shy beauty that can only be explained perhaps by a true understanding of our long history. We have been schooled by the noblest of masters. For near four hundred years great Rome was at work redeeming us from barbarism: when she fell and we were engulfed, Christian now, she once again persuaded us from the brute, and for nearly a thousand years held up our souls in her hands. Because of her we are of the company of Western Europe, doubly are we her own daughter, she made us men and Christians, she saved our bodies and our souls. Is it too wonderful, therefore, it now and then even in our worst moments something that she has sown in the soil she prepared, that has been perhaps long forgotten, should blossom suddenly for the delight of all men? It was so in the miserable years of the seventeenth century; may it be so for ever.

much in these parts and his most masterly touches of his Pastoralls he wrote here upon the spot where they were conceived. 'Twas about these parts that the Muses were wont to appeal to him, and where he wrote down their dictates in his table-book, though on horseback. I remember some old relations of mine and other old men hereabout that have seen Sir Philip doe this."

Bemerton lies on the edge of the meads just to the north of the mingled stream of Wylye and Nadder, not much more than a mile to the west of Salisbury. It is a small and very ancient place, older far than Domesday Book in which it is mentioned, and it probably stands upon the old Roman road which ran south-west from Old Sarum to Dorchester, before Bishop Bingham built the bridge at Harnham and changed the direction of the road to serve the new city of Salisbury. Little



Bemerton Church.

more than a suburb of Sarum now, Bemerton remains in our hearts as an individual place, a holy place, a shrine and a sanctuary, not like Old Sarum, because of its antiquity and beauty, but because from 1630 to 1632 George Herbert was rector there, restored the little church, died at the parsonage, and lies buried before the altar.

The little old church of St. Andrew, which means so much to us, dates from the fourteenth century, and it was its bell in the bell-cote tower that George Herbert rang, when at his induction he was shut into the church, being left alone there as the law requires for this purpose. Isaak Walton in his beautiful " Life "

tells us that "he stayed so much longer than an ordinary time before he returned to those friends that stayed expecting him at the church door, that his friend, Mr. Woodnot, looked in at the church window and saw him lie prostrate on the ground before the altar." It was that same night that he said to this friend: "... I beseech that God who hath honoured me so much as to call me to serve Him at His altar, that as by His special grace He hath put into my heart these good desires and resolutions; so He will, by His assisting grace, give me ghostly strength to bring the same to good effect. And I beseech Him that my humble and charitable life may so win upon others as to bring glory to my Jesus, Whom I have this day taken to be my master and governour—and I am so proud of His service that I will always observe, and obey and do His will; and always call Him Jesus my Master, and I will always contemn my birth or any title or dignity that can be conferred upon me when I shall compare them with my title of being priest and serving at the altar of Jesus my Master."

So the third day after he was made Rector of Bemerton, he changed his sword and silk clothes into a canonical coat, and almost immediately set about to repair the chancel of his little church, and "indeed to rebuild almost three parts of his house which was fallen down or decayed by reason of his predecessor's living at a better parsonage house, ... sixteen or twenty miles from this place; ... and having done this good work he caused these verses to be writ upon or engraven in the mantel of the chimney in his hall:

'To my Successor.

If thou chance for to find
A new house to thy mind
And built without thy cost;
Be good to the poor
As God gives thee store
And then my labour's not lost.'"

These verses are now reproduced carved in stone in the outside wall of the parsonage opposite the church.

There Herbert lived and died, thence he would so often set out on his favourite walk into Salisbury across the meads, encountering many an adventure on the way; thence he corresponded with Nicholas Ferrer at Little Gidding, sending him his "excellent book," as Walton calls it, "The Temple," of which

Nicholas Ferrer wrote: "there was in it the picture of a divine soul on every page." Perhaps here he may have written those lines called "Easter":

> "I got me flowers to strew Thy way,
> I got me boughs off many a tree,
> But Thou wast up by break of day
> And brought'st Thy sweets along with Thee."

Perhaps there he too may have been fearful:

> "Religion stands a tip-toe in our land
> Ready to pass to the American strand:"

lines which the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge would by no means allow.

He loved music too, it was indeed his "chiefest recreation," and in that "heavenly art he was a most excellent master and did compose many divine hymns and anthems which he set or sung to his lute or viol." It was for his lute he called indeed on the Sunday before his death, "rising suddenly from his couch," and taking it into his hand played and sung. His whole life was devoted to all that was fair and of good report, for he was a cavalier as well as a saint, and in his own person proved that the spiritual life is the exclusive possession neither of the ascetic nor of the puritan. A small and too modest tablet alone commemorates him there in his own church, and marks his grave in the chancel: "G. H. 1633." Not even

> ". . . a herald who that way doth pass
> Finds his crack'd name at length in the church glass."

In the beautiful garden of the parsonage an ancient medlar and a fig tree are shewn as having been planted by him, and the new church, St. John's, which should have been St. George's not far away was built in the middle of the nineteenth century as a monument to him who till the Oxford movement was all but forgotten.

George Herbert was a kinsman of the great family, Earls of Pembroke, whose seat, Wilton House, stands not much more than a mile away westward, still in the meads, to the south of Fugglestone, of which, with Bemerton, Herbert was rector. Wilton itself, that most ancient town, sometime capital of Wiltshire, to which, it is said, it has given its name, lies beyond the great house, a pleasant, but no longer a beautiful place. Wilton has lost so much by every sort of destruction that

its great antiquity is an invisible garment which no one would guess at save that a certain air of repose, a dignity due after all rather to the proximity of the great house than to any conscious virtue in the town, still hangs about it. It stands on the peninsula of land thrust out between the Wylye and the Nadder which meet before it, and together with the high downs westward lend it a defence that must have been exceedingly strong in ancient times.

Wilton is supposed to be the Caer-Guilon or chief seat of the British Prince Caroilius, and later the capital of the West Saxon dominions. It was here, as some say, that in the year 823 Egbert of Wessex overthrew his enemy and rival Beornwulf. In 871, however, we are on firmer ground, and we may be sure that it was at Wilton in that year that Alfred defeated the Danes. Before then Wilton had become a royal residence, the capital of Wiltshire, and it was probably for this reason, though it could never have had the military importance of Old Sarum, that Sweyn in 1003, having taken it, burnt it to the ground. It certainly revived and was rebuilt, and the Normans made it one of the first of the Royal Boroughs, and it continued to flourish, till in the year 1143 King Stephen took possession of it, intending to convert the ancient nunnery for which it was famous into a place of defence, but being surprised by the forces of the Empress Matilda, under the command of the Earl of Gloucester, was obliged to flee, leaving behind him his troops and baggage; the town was again given up to pillage and burnt by the victors.

As Harding has it:

> "The Kyng Stephen a castell then began
> At Wilton, where Kyng David with power
> And Erle Robert of Gloucester that was then
> Him drave awaye out of that place full clere
> And bet it doune to the grounde full here."

Wilton recovered from this calamity, but began to decline in the succeeding century in consequence of the foundation of New Sarum, and especially by reason of the change in the direction of the great western road, of which I have already spoken, which followed soon after, in 1244.

A century later the town was stricken by the Black Death, which is said to have carried off a third of the population. This would appear finally to have settled the fate of Wilton.

Leland tells us: "The chaunging of this way was the totale cause of the ruine of Old Saresbyri and Wilton. For afore this Wilton had a 12 paroch churches or more, and was hedde town of Wileshir." At the same time we know that in the fifteenth century the town did a good trade in brewing beer, while in 1551, after Leland's visit, Edward VI. came here in search of health, and in 1579 Elizabeth found the place both "merrie and pleasaunt." In 1603, too, the Court was here, James I. frequently visiting it, setting out thence to see Stonehenge. In 1627, on account of the plague, Salisbury Market was transferred here, and local tradition will have it that a stone by the wayside between Netherhampton and West Harnham is the place where in a basin of vinegar the money of the people of the plague-stricken city was received. For long now Wilton has been famous for the manufacture of carpets, which was introduced by a former Earl of Pembroke, who brought over workmen from France for that purpose—it was the first place in England where this manufacture began.

Almost nothing remains in the town of Wilton to-day to bear witness to its ancient greatness. Of Leland's "twelve parish churches and more," not one is left, yet all may be named, thanks to Hoare. St. Mary's stood in Brede Street, where some ivy-clad ruins may still be seen, together with the old borough Cross by the wall. St. Michael's was in South Street, but its exact site is unknown, as is that of Holy Trinity. St. Nicholas was in West Street, St. Nicholas in Atrio which was in ruins as early as 1366, and St. Michael's in Kingsbury, with which it was then united, stood on unknown sites, and the same is true of St. Mary, West Street, St. Andrew's, St. Peter's, and St. Edward's. St. Katherine's was at Netherhampton, but has been totally destroyed. This accounts for eleven churches. Three others—St. Edith's, the great Nunnery Church, St. John's Priory, and St. Giles Chapel, though not "parish churches," must also be mentioned.

I shall speak of the nunnery in a moment; but with regard to St. John's Priory or Hospital, with its chapel, which was founded by Bishop Hubert of Sarum about 1189, the chapel with a few remains of the buildings still stands. The Hospital of St. Giles was founded by Adela, second wife of Henry I., as a leper hospital, for gossip, which an old inscription confirmed, says Adela was herself a leper. The church was re-edified in



The Palladian Bridge, Wilton House

1624 "by John Townsend, Mayor of Wilton, and his brethren adopted patrons thereof by the gift of Queen Adela, wife unto King Henry I. Has Adela was a leper. She had a window

and door from her lodging into the chancell of the Chapel, whence she heard prayer. She lieth buried under a marble gravestone." Nothing at all remains of the Dominican House here established in 1245.

Old Wilton has indeed passed away. The new parish church, a horrible building "in the Lombardic style," built in 1844, would indeed not be worth a visit, but for the fact that in the upper part of the pulpit and in the chancel are some twisted



Garden Front by Inigo Jones, Wilton House.

Cosmati columns which once formed part of the tomb of Cardinal Gonsalvo in St. Maria Maggiore in Rome. They were in the Strawberry Hill collection and were bought by the Hon. Sidney Herbert, afterwards Lord Herbert of Lea, and placed in the church which he had founded.

No, the secret of Wilton in so far as it is to be discovered at all, will not be found here, but where Wilton House stands to-day, as it has for near four centuries upon the site of the great Benedictine Nunnery of Wilton.

This nunnery was the second in antiquity and importance

within the county. The first, Amesbury, dated as we shall see from Romano-British days, this of Wilton was founded according to tradition by King Alfred, who endowed it with his manor of Wilton, establishing it in his own royal palace for an abbess and twelve nuns. Another story will have it that Alfred was but the refounder here of a house first established by Wulstan, Earl of Wiltshire, in 800, of which in 830 his widow, Ethelburga, became the first abbess. Then after its refoundation Wulftrude, the beautiful mistress of King Edgar, who had abducted her from this nunnery, became abbess there in 968, repenting her of her sin after giving birth to St. Edith. She refused the marriage Edgar offered her, but devoted herself to religion and the care of her daughter, whom she brought up at Wilton, and who became the great ornament and fame of the nunnery, though never abbess. She died in 984 at the age of twenty-three. Many miracles were worked at her tomb, and she became the patroness of the Abbey in whose honour its church was dedicated, when a second Edith, daughter of Earl Godwin, and Queen of Edward the Confessor, rebuilt the church in stone, for till then it had been but of timber, and had it consecrated by Bishop Herman in 1065. About this time, Christina, sister of Edgar Atheling, was abbess, and it is said her niece Maud, a novice there, wore the veil only unwillingly "to save herself from the insolence of the Normans," for this was a very English house by reason of the presence of Edith the Queen. But the most famous adventure the Abbey ever saw occurred in the time of Edward I., when Juliana de Giffard was abbess. Then Osborn de Giffard carried off two nuns, and for his offence was sentenced "to be whipt naked with rods three several Sundays in the church of Wilton, and also in the church and market place of Shaftesbury," for he was a Dorset man. Also he was to wear no shirt nor any knightly insignia, but only russet and sheepskins till he had been three times to the Holy Land.

It is tragically amusing to find that just before the Dissolution, Anne Boleyn wished to make a friend of hers abbess. Henry put her off saying, "I wolde not for all the golde in the world clog your conscience nor mine to make her a ruler of a house which is of so ungodly a demeanour." When we come to Henry's "conscience" we are indeed in the bogs of hell. The place, famous as it was, was, of course, doomed. In the fatal

year 1535 the infamous Legh visited the house and behaved very harshly to the abbess, Cecilia Bodenham, who writes to Cromwell to complain. Less than four years later, on Lady Day, 1539, Wilton was surrendered. There were then in the house beside the abbess, who by her office was a peeress of England, an honour she shared only with the abbesses of Shaftesbury, Barking, and St. Mary's, Winchester, thirty-one nuns. The abbess received one hundred pounds and certain houses, and retired to Fovant; and the nunnery with the lands attached to it were granted by the king, who had stolen them, to Sir William Herbert, first Earl of Pembroke, a remarkable man who by "making good use of his opportunities during this eventful period managed to secure continued accession of power and wealth."

Upon getting possession Herbert pulled down all the monastic buildings, including the church which Queen Edith had built, except a block of storehouses to the north-west which still stand. This is a beautiful building especially upon the north, and would seem to date from the middle of the fourteenth century.

Herbert then set about building his new house with the stones of the old abbey, but only the central block remains, and this much altered. It is with its porch attributed to Holbein, and is a curious and not unpleasing mixture of Italian and northern styles. But nothing long remained at Wilton. In the time of Charles I. the house was largely rebuilt by Solomon de Caus, and was then restored after a fire by Webb, the son-in-law of Inigo Jones. In the end of the eighteenth century it was "Gothicised" by Wyatt, and has been altered again and again. It remains, nevertheless, one of the great houses of England, chiefly because of its wonderful collection of works of art. Here Sir Philip Sidney wrote part of his "Arcadia" for his "Dear Lady and sister, the Countess of Pembroke," whose beautiful epitaph by William Browne we all know by heart:

> "Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother,
> Death, ere thou hast slain another
> Wise and fair and good as she,
> Time shall throw a dart at thee."

Here dwelt perhaps Shakespeare's "Mr. W. H.," and here certainly Shakespeare acted before James I. in 1603. And these are but its chief glories. Ben Jonson has been here, and

Vandyck, and perhaps Inigo Jones. Vandyck at least still haunts the palace which boasts his magnificent picture of the



The Hedge Front, Wilton House.

Herbert family among its noble possessions. Here is a Van der Goes, there a Mantegna, here a Rubens, there a Rembrandt, a Lotto, and no less than nine portraits by Reynolds.

Best of all, here is one of the most precious things in England, that "Wilton Diptych" which almost alone remains as an example of what England could do in the way of painting in the late fourteenth century. There we see the young king Richard II., his patron Saints—St. John Baptist, St. Edward the Martyr, and St. Edward the Confessor—presenting him to the Blessed Virgin, to whom he gave England as Dowry; so that even yet in happier lands than this, this fair England, fairer than we know, is known as the Dowry of the Blessed Virgin.[1]

With that wonderful picture in mind, and the act it commemorates, one returns from Wilton across the meads or perhaps through Netherhampton, where in a fine old William and Mary house, still marked with an iron coat, the poet of "Admirals All" lives at the gates of Wilton; and so on through West Harnham, where it is worth while visiting the Norman and Early English Church, past the old sixteenth century mill, with its Wiltshire chequer work, home again to Salisbury under its spire.

[1] In Assisi, for instance, I was given a picture of the Annunciation by the Friars of the Porziuncola with this prayer on the back of it: "O Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our most gentle Queen and Mother, look down in mercy upon England thy Dowry. . . ."

CHAPTER IV

THE LOWER VALLEY OF THE SALISBURY AVON AND ITS HILLS

It is in Salisbury that all the roads of South Wiltshire and the Plain meet: it is from Salisbury they all set out north, south, east, and west, traversing all this country, and for the most part by way of those five famous valleys of which Salisbury is the nodal point; the valleys, from west to east, of the Ebble, the Nadder, the Wylye, the Avon, and the Bourne, that, like the fingers of an outstretched right hand, of which the palm is Salisbury, pierce the great chalk country of these Wiltshire Downs, the major part of which we call Salisbury Plain.

It is by these valleys the country lives; in them are the husbandry and the villages, and there the shepherds and the sheep of the Downs have their homes. To follow them one by one, and always from Salisbury, in all their winding length and quiet beauty, is to understand the nature of South Wiltshire, for against their laughter and life there is ever as a background the silence and utter loneliness of the Downs, and the Plain which in a very real sense they inform, and, if one may so express it, redeem from a certain inhumanity. I shall write of the Plain, the greatest thing in Wiltshire, later; for it too must be known: but now I will write of these valleys, each differing so from the other, which run so variously and always so joyfully through the forsaken graveyard of the Down country. And first I will speak of the lower valley of the Avon, of that wide vale which runs due south from Sarum and waters all the south-east corner of the county.

I have said that the five valleys which all meet in the meads, where Salisbury lies, are like the fingers of an outstretched right hand. It is so. But among these I have not counted the

lower valley of the Avon. If those five valleys are the fingers of a hand in which Salisbury is the palm, the lower valley of the Avon is the forearm and the wrist which bears that hand. It is the greatest of them all, though not, perhaps, the most beautiful, and the best way to enter it is to pass out of the close by St. Anne's Gate, to turn there to the right through East Harnham, and so to follow the Christchurch road which goes hand in hand with the river all the way to the sea.

Nothing of much interest, unless it be the little Catholic Church of St. Osmund, built after the designs of the elder Pugin, which we pass just outside St. Anne's Gate, greets us, until a mile beyond, where the road forks, Britford lies in the meadows to the left of the road in a great bend of the stream, a delicious place over which, not too near, not too far away, the spire of Sarum dreams.

Britford can boast, too, of something beside its own beauty, for it possesses that most rare thing a church certainly of Saxon foundation, and happily and more rarely still with something of Saxon work left to it. As we see it the church is a cruciform building for the most part of Decorated style, with a considerable central tower embattled and with a low spire. It was restored in 1873, and before that time had a western entrance; but the work then undertaken laid bare, if it did not first reveal, fragments of a church much earlier than the fourteenth century in the curious recesses of the nave, two on the south and one on the north, the more western one on the south being incorporated by Street in the modern porch. The two recesses opposite one another at the east end of the nave which we may now examine (before the Restoration they were built up and plastered over) have been protected by outbuildings, and would seem, at one time, to have given access to side chapels. The character of these arches is very curious, and is certainly not later than the early eleventh century, so that we seem to have here Saxon work. The most remarkable feature is undoubtedly the ornamentation on the upright jamb stones and the squares on the eastern jamb of the northern arch, which, if indeed it be Saxon, and it is certainly no later, is unique of its kind. The Roman brick of the southern arch, the imposts, which are there cut away to receive the head of the jamb stones mortised into them, have suggested to more than one archæologist that we have here Roman work; but the majority of

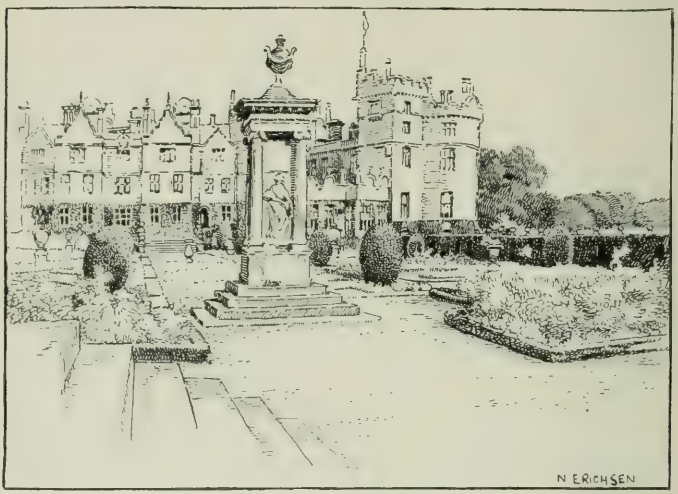
critics seem to favour the attribution of these arches to the Saxons of the ninth century, which seems almost as remarkable a conclusion as the other. In any case it is said we have here a substantially Saxon nave to which a later central tower, transept and chancel, have been added in the fourteenth century.

The church is interesting throughout. In each transept there is a piscina which points of old to the site of an altar, and in the west wall of the south transept there is a squint through which the altar in that transept could be seen from outside. In the chancel, too, we have a piscina with rising sedilia, and on the north here is the fine altar tomb, sculptured with figures of the Blessed Virgin and Child, St. Margaret, St. Nicholas, St. Edmund of Canterbury, St. Catherine, and St. George, which, according to local tradition, is that of the Duke of Buckingham, executed by Richard III. According to Brown's "Guide to Sarum," the tomb was removed from the De Vaux College to its present site, and there may well be something in this: at any rate the canopy does not belong to it, but probably to a tomb once recessed in the wall here. Here in the chancel, too, is the tomb of the Bouverie family and a dwarf effigy of Purbeck, something like that of the so-called "Boy Bishop" in the Cathedral, but of far finer workmanship.

To the north-west of the church is a beautiful brick and stone house with mullioned windows, which is the old parsonage.

The southern end of Britford village is bounded by the Park of Longford Castle, the seat of the Earls of Radnor. It was not, however, a Bouverie who built the place, but the wife of Sir Thomas Gorges, whose amazing tomb stands in the north aisle of the choir of Salisbury Cathedral. It seems that this Sir Thomas Gorges married in the end of the sixteenth century Helena Snakenburg, a Danish lady who had come to England in the train of Princess Cecilia, daughter of Eric, King of Sweden. A favourite at Court, this lady first married William Parr, Marquis of Northampton, cousin of Sir Ferdinando Gorges, "father of English colonisation in America," one of the brilliant band of English nobles, who at that time combined active service with the finest literary achievements. He died in 1517, and she married Sir Thomas Gorges. He was persuaded by his wife to pull down the old house which the Cervingtons had built here, where Longford Castle stands to-day, and to build a house after the model of the Castle of Uranienburg, designed

by Tycho Brahe. But the expense proved so great, for he had to drive piles into the valley marsh for foundation, that he was like to be ruined. This in 1587. In the following year appeared the Armada, and Sir Thomas being then governor of Hurst Castle, by the greatest good fortune for his projects, secured a Spanish galleon which was wrecked near by. His wife, it is said, begged the hull of the Queen, and this being granted her she found bars of silver and other treasure therein

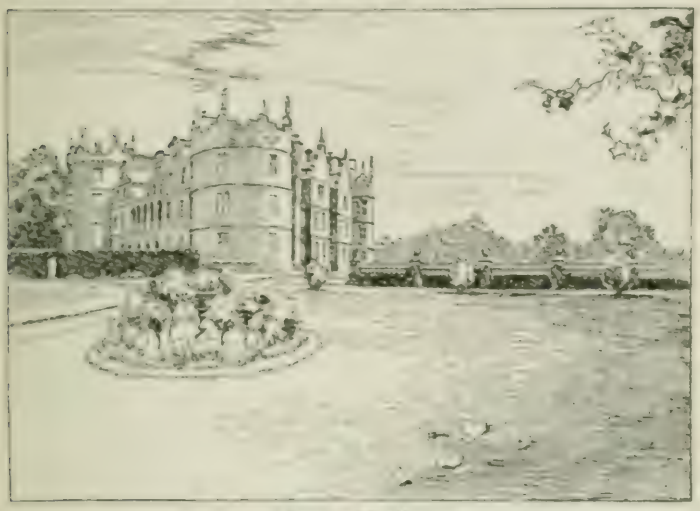


Longford Castle.

more than enough to build Longford, which with this spoil was completed in 1591, by that Thomas Thorpe who built Holland House. The place was soon famous, and appears as the Castle of Amphilus in Sir Philip Sidney's "Arcadia." It was of most curious form, being built in the shape of a triangle about a court, and flanked at each angle by a circular tower, the whole surrounded by a moat fed by the Avon. It was this singular fortress that Cromwell took in October, 1645. In 1717 the Bouveries bought it and soon set about rebuilding and adding to it. For long it remained an unfinished hexagon, till it was completed in the middle of the nineteenth century

by the late Lord Radnor. The place which remains very curious is chiefly famous for its collection of paintings, especially of the works of Holbein.

One passes on down the valley along the high road past Trafalgar House in the woods on the hills, the eighteenth century mansion given by the nation to the first Earl Nelson, brother of England's Admiral. There are preserved Nelson's arm-chair, couch, telescope, and cane, with other relics.



Longford Castle

Passing on under this great mansion away to the left, in about two miles one comes to the Inn of Downton on the high road, and turning up beside it enters the old picturesque village, and passing the old Borough Cross opposite the White Horse Inn, comes to the church. This is a fine cruciform building of flint and stone with a restored central tower embattled. It is dedicated to St. Laurence, and is of considerable antiquity. In the churchyard is the tall shaft of a Cross, and the porch here dates only from 1648, but the spacious and imposing aisled nave is Transitional Norman, passing in the two loftier eastern bays into Early English. The transepts are Early English

with Perpendicular additions. In the eastern wall of the south transept is a very fine Early English window, while at the north end of the north transept is a Decorated canopied space. There is, too, a delightful Decorated arch with interesting capitals between the south aisle and the south transept. The chancel, however, is the loveliest part of the building. It is Decorated work, and the east and side windows are beautiful. The Decorated sedilia also remain. The font is Norman, of Purbeck marble. What more than this can the traveller demand of any church he enters? Here is an epitome of England, it cannot be loved and cared for too much.

Downton is a place, as its church would tell us, of long memories. Of its very early importance we might seem to be assured by the mound called the Moot at the east end of the village in the grounds of Downton House, where it is said Saxon courts of justice were held. It is in any case an interesting relic. But indeed Downton, if all be true, must have been founded long before that, for it stood not more than a mile from the famous ford of the Avon here, Cerdisford—Charford—as we may believe the scene of the great battle fought according to the Saxon Chronicle by Cerdic and Cymric against the Romano-Britons in 519, by which the kingdom of Wessex was established. So Downton grew famous, was given by King Kenwath to the Cathedral church of Winchester, which held it still when Domesday Survey was taken.[1] The Bishops of Winchester had a palace on the right bank of the river here known as Old Court—the site is still shown. Presently the place sent members to Parliament and continued, indeed, to send two until the Reform Bill of 1832. Among those members were several famous men, the earliest being a brother of Raleigh. The old manor house of the Raleighs, an Elizabethan house, the birthplace of that Admiral Curtis who commanded the gunboats at the siege of Gibraltar, may still be seen, its old chimney piece sculptured with shields. It appears for some time to have been the parsonage.

From Downton I went on eastward over the hill which gave me a fine view of Salisbury spire, through Redlynch, and so past Newhouse, a fine Elizabethan mansion built in 1619, and enlarged in 1689 by Chief Justice Eyre, northward again by Titchbourne Farm to Whiteparish. The church of St. Michael

[1] See *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xxxvi. 50.

and All Angels stands, as we might expect, on rising ground, and very charmingly too above the village. It has a wooden belfry at the west end, and within is of much interest, for the nave is largely Transitional Norman, the arcades consisting of round barrel pillars supporting pointed arches. The monuments, however, have not much distinction, but at the west end there is a memorial to one of the Eyres who was imprisoned in 1640 for resisting the demands of Charles I., a kind of village Hampden, I suppose. The inscription is as follows:

> "Buried here Gyles Eyre Esq^r^ and Jane his wife. A man much oppressed by publick power for his laudable opposition to the measures taken in the Reigns of James I. and Charles I. In the year 1640 (for then well-known Court reasons) he was x x x x; was afterwards plundered at Brickworth by the King's soldiers of 2000£ value and imprisoned for refusing to pay the sum of 400£ illegally demanded of him by two instruments under the Privy Seal bearing date at Oxford, 14 February 1643. He was Baptised February 1572, dyed January 1655 having issue seven sons (three of whom were likewise members of parliament) and four daughters."

Westward from the church still stands an old manor house of the time of Giles Eyre, though it belonged to the Lynches. Close by is a fine old farmhouse very well worth a visit, called Welply.

North of Whiteparish rises Dean Hill, some five hundred feet at its best, a long chalk down running east and west upon the Hampshire border. To climb it is to win one of the noblest views in all Wiltshire, for it gives you southward all the New Forest nearly to the sea, and northward all that eastern part of Salisbury Plain which lies about Winterslow. There I lay a whole summer afternoon looking over the woods to Castle Malwood and Romsey Abbey, and the hills about the Pheasant Inn thinking of the Red King, the Norman adventure and William Hazlitt. Then I went down about four o'clock into West Dean, which lies right under the steep northern escarpment of the great hill.

West Dean is a very pretty place with the remains of an interesting church, and a fine old house which now stands over the county border. This was a seat of the Evelyns, and later came to the first Duke of Kingston, whose famous daughter

Lady Mary Montagu, in one of her letters, compares "this part of the world" to its hurt with Nottinghamshire!

All that is left of the old church, now a mortuary chapel, lies hidden among the trees; this consists of the south aisle or Chantry Chapel with its fourteenth century windows. It contains three or four large monuments of the seventeenth century Evelyns, two of them curiously enclosed with iron doors. A brass here commemorates George, son of John Evelyn, the author of the famous *Diary*. There is a new church in West Dean, in which may be seen a few fragments from the old building now destroyed, such as the Early English column with sculptured capital, which serves as a reading desk.

Behind the church is a fine old red brick barn curiously buttressed on the south, and probably of early sixteenth century date. It is said to have been originally a tithe barn of Mottisfont Abbey in Hants, but later was used as a "Deer Barn," where the forest deer were sheltered and fed at times. West Dean lies only a few miles south of the great Roman highway from Winchester to Old Sarum, and it is not surprising, therefore, that the remains of a Roman villa were found here between the station and the vicarage some years ago, but these, too, are over the border.

From West Dean it is delightful to follow the old canal through West Grimstead to Alderbury.

At West Grimstead there is a little old church, very reverent and homely and still, upheld by Early English pillars, and here is what looks like a Saxon font. The whole humble little building is indeed worth close and loving inspection. The north arcade is of two bays, and is certainly of the thirteenth century. The south has only one arch, opposite the east bay of the north arcade; it is of the fourteenth century, as is the chancel arch and the three-lighted east window of the chancel. Nave and aisles still possess their old fourteenth century roofs. The pulpit is Jacobean. Altogether this little church is a delight on a lonely road, as is lonelier Standlynch too, two miles to the south, where the church dates from the twelfth century.

At Alderbury the church has been rebuilt in our own time, but there remain to be seen there Alderbury House, built from the ruins of the old Bell Tower of Salisbury Cathedral, and the delightful Green Dragon Inn, a real old English hostelry which, as we know, Mark Tapley "was fond of." "I thought,"

pursued the landlady with a most engaging hesitation, "that you had been—fond—of the Dragon?" "So I am," said Mark. But it is not of Mark Tapley that I think to-day after all in the Dragon, but of the Priory of Ivychurch, for in the bar there—the delightful room they call the bar—is a magnificent stone mantelpiece which came from the Priory close by, whose few but lovely remains no one should fail to see. It was an Augustinian House founded by Stephen. It is described by the destroyers in the time of Henry VIII. as "the Priory of Ederos alias Ivychurch," and is called "the hedde house of chanons of Seint Augustynes rule; the church whereof is the parish church to the inhabitants of Whaddon and the forest of Claringdon." At the dissolution the Priory buildings went to the Dean and Chapter of Sarum who leased to Lord Pembroke. The Earl of Radnor bought the place at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and a school was established here where Professor Fawcett was educated. All was destroyed finally in 1888, so that almost nothing remains; one complete round pillar and one respond of the arcade with parts of two arches from the north aisle of the church. A cottage hard by seems to have been built of the stones of the broken buildings, and there are to be seen in the walls of that little house many a beautiful fragment, figures even of the Blessed Virgin and Child, of St. Peter vested as Bishop of Bishops, the keys in his right hand, and I know not what else; delicious things of the fourteenth century, holy too, now used to stop a hole withal.

From Ivychurch he is wise who turns north again past Clarendon Park, and pushing on through the pre-Norman Forest of Clarendon comes to Farley.

It was at Clarendon in Clarendon Forest that in 1164 the great Council of the Realm promulgated the famous Constitutions of Clarendon. The Royal Palace in the Forest, two miles north-west of Clarendon, was a favourite with the Plantagenets, who were almost as fond of the chase as the Norman kings had been.

Farley is chiefly to be seen for the sake of the church it owes to Sir Stephen Fox, who was born there, and was famous in Dutch William's time. He was, of course, a politician, but he did better than most of his sort, for he founded not one family, but two, the noble houses of Holland and Ilchester, and was the grandfather of Charles James Fox. In 1652 he built the alms-

house opposite the church for three poor men and as many women, and there you may see his portrait. Six years later, in 1688, he built the astonishing church in place of "a ruined chapel." It is certainly curious to come upon a building in a Wiltshire village which is purely of the Italian Renaissance, but that is what we have at Farley, and since it is unique I for one am delighted with it. It is as though here in the Forest of Clarendon we had come upon a daughter church of St. Paul's Cathedral. Built by Sir Stephen Fox in 1688, it was in course of erection when St. Paul's was rebuilding, and like that masterpiece it is a work of Latin genius inspired by the Italian Renaissance. In one respect it is in fact a more perfect example of the Renaissance idea than St. Paul's, for it is not compromised as the London Cathedral and St. Peter's in Rome are by a long nave, but is a true Greek cross such as Bramante had conceived. A brick building with stone dressings, it suggests Venice or Rome rather than London at last, and very well it chimes with this Roman countryside, these vast rolling Downs and immemorial encampments. The unfortunate restoration of the church in 1874 has robbed us of much ; the oak screen in the south transept has been spoiled, though the chancel screen remains with the old pews and a good part of the panelling. It is the chancel which has suffered most, among other changes the fine old oak altar-piece having been replaced there by one of stone.

North of Farley, still in the Forest, lies the village of Pitton, with its church of St. Peter and chapelry of Farley, unfortunately rebuilt in recent times. Nevertheless it contains still a few old features, as the curious fourteenth century pointed arch of the south doorway enclosing a late Norman doorway within. In the west wall of the nave is an early fourteenth century window of three lights, quite charming in character, and in the chancel is the capital of a Norman pillar, and an old piscina.

From Pitton one climbs up to Winterton northward some 450 feet above the sea. Here, too, the church, dedicated in honour of All Saints, has been restored and enlarged. Before 1851 the nave was but two bays in length, in that year the western part was added and the church largely rebuilt. In the old part of the nave we have an Early Norman work in the south arcade, while the north seems to be Transitional, as does the chancel arch. At the west ends of the aisles are windows, that in the

south is of the fifteenth century; but in the north of the fourteenth. The font is Norman, but all is restored almost beyond recognition. As is proved by a lithograph in the Devizes Museum, above the chancel arch of old, on the west, there was painted a Doom about a wooden crucifix. All has now been destroyed or hidden by whitewash.

The manor of Winterslow—Winterslow House was burnt to the ground in 1744—was held in the time of Edward III. by John de Roches, and by a most curious service. It seems that whenever the king was at his Palace of Clarendon, the lord of Winterslow had to go thither and take "from any vessel he chose, as much wine as would be needful for making one pitcher of claret which he should make at the King's charge, and that he should serve the King and keep the cup for himself, and all the wine that was left in the vessel from which he drew."

But in Winterslow it is not of such old customs we are thinking, but of a great man of letters, William Hazlitt, who for so long made Winterslow Hut, or as we say the Pheasant Inn, his home. About the time Hazlitt was there, in 1816, the Pheasant Inn was the scene of a singular accident. On a dark night in October in that lonely place, the Exeter Mail was in the act of pulling up there when "to the dismay of the affrighted passengers the off leader was seized by a lioness, which had escaped from a caravan on its way to Salisbury Fair. A large mastiff bounded to the rescue, but the lioness left the horse which had fought with great spirit and pursued the dog, which it killed within forty yards. The keeper of the animal, however, soon arrived, and with considerable risk to himself contrived to drive it into an outhouse and there secured it." A painting of the scene may be seen at the inn.

It was at some time, probably, in 1806 that William Hazlitt became acquainted with Miss Sarah Stoddart, the daughter of a retired naval officer and sister of the Dr. Stoddart who was afterwards Editor of the *Times*. The Stoddarts were friends of the Lambs, and in the following year Hazlitt became engaged to Miss Stoddart, who had inherited from her father a small property at Winterslow. Upon his marriage in 1808 Hazlitt settled with his wife at Winterslow in a small cottage belonging to her there, and at once fell in love with the country. In 1809 the Lambs paid him a visit, and indeed Hazlitt's happiest days were spent in this solitude. There his children were born,

and there later at the Hut or Pheasant Inn much of his work was done. For after the winter of 1819 Hazlitt lived apart from his wife, but could not forsake Winterslow, whose amazing loveliness seems to have attracted him, so he took up his abode at the " Hut," and it was there he wrote the delightful " Winterslow Essays," which, however, have nothing to do with Winterslow, expressing as they do his love of literature rather than of country life, the " Life of Napoleon," and other works. It was chiefly, one may think, the quietness he found in Winterslow which enabled him to say when he died in 1830 : " Well, I've had a happy life."

Of late years Winterslow has become famous, as the scene of a land-venture begun in 1889 by Major Poore, a most successful system of small holdings or rather of Peasant Proprietorship. The scheme began with the purchase of 192 acres in Winterslow at £10 an acre, with the idea of selling under conditions to those inhabitants of the village represented by a Committee : later this Committee gave way to a Land Court. There are now not less than forty-seven members of this Land Court with a reserve fund created by their efforts of more than £1,400. Of the original leaseholders thirty-seven are heads of families, each enjoying the fruits of his labour and thrift in a well-built cottage of his own, standing on ground he has bought and toiled upon to improve, and that now happily supports him and his family.

CHAPTER V

THE VALLEY OF THE BOURNE

Of the five valleys with their streams which come down from the hills to Sarum in the meads, wherein they are made one, the most eastern is that of the Bourne; if it is not the most interesting, it is certainly not the least beautiful.

To reach it one sets out from Salisbury by the Andover road, which, about a mile and a half after leaving the city, forsakes the western bank of the Bourne, crossing the stream by St. Thomas' Bridge. This crossing place is of very considerable interest. It carries, as we see, the road from Andover over the the stream towards Salisbury, and thus bears the great eastern road into the city. But there is much more than this. When Salisbury was founded we read that Bishop Poore (1217–1229) was empowered by the charter of Henry III. to "change, transfer and make the ways and bridges" leading to the city in such a manner as was deemed most expedient. In St. Thomas' Bridge it seems to me we have one of his works.

Before Salisbury was founded the great road from the east was that from Winchester which forded the Bourne at Winterbourne Ford half a mile to the north of St. Thomas' Bridge, and entered Old Sarum by the eastern gate. But when Old Sarum was abandoned by the ecclesiastics and the people it is obvious that this eastern road would have been among the first to be diverted from the old to the new city. Bishop Poore obtained power from the king to do this, and as it seems to me, we have here evidence of his work. The old Roman road was diverted southward where Hillcrest Bungalow now stands, and instead of making for the old ford turned south-east and crossed the stream by the bridge of St. Thomas.

In support of this theory consider this. If the road for the new city had used the old ford, that is to say if the diversion had taken place after the crossing, it would have been exceed-

ingly awkward owing to the fact that below the old ford the stream runs almost due west for a quarter of a mile. Far better and more in accordance with the energy of the thirteenth century was the erection of a new crossing place and bridge, and this was named after the great Saint whose martyrdom especially filled the thirteenth century with enthusiasm, a church in whose honour the parish church of Salisbury had just been founded.

There is this too. The enthusiasm for St. Thomas had at that time been raised to its highest pitch by the translation of his relics in July, 1220, the very year of the foundation of Salisbury. Pilgrims flocked to the shrine at Canterbury. Those who set out from Salisbury would follow the road to Winchester, and there join the Pilgrims' Way along the Downs—a road older than history. Such pilgrims on such a pilgrimage would have crossed the river here, and probably that is the origin of the bridge's name and its dedication to St. Thomas. All this I attribute to Bishop Poore, not only because he had obtained power and permission to carry it out, but also because we know that his successor, Bishop Bingham, dealt with the deviation of the western road crossing from Dorchester, and built Harnham Bridge. It is certain that when the western roads were altered the far more important eastern roads had already been dealt with.

At St. Thomas' Bridge five roads meet to-day. Of the three running north that on the right is the main road to Andover. We leave it for the middle way which goes due north up the valley, and in something less than a mile crosses the old Roman road between Winchester and Old Sarum. Half a mile or less to the west this old Roman road crosses the Bourne at Winterbourne Ford. It was not where we stand at these cross roads, however, that Bishop Poore in my view began the deviation of his new road to Salisbury, but nearly a mile along the old Roman road eastward, where to-day the Andover road running north-east crosses the Roman highway. There to-day stands Hill-crest Bungalow, a hospital, and to the north of it rises the great earthwork of Figsbury Rings, Old Sarum standing up grandly to the west.

Figsbury Rings, which Camden calls Fripsbury, is a vast circular encampment of fifteen acres, consisting of a strong single rampart surrounded by a ditch, but with another ditch roughly following the line of the rampart within. This interior ditch is, indeed, its chief peculiarity, and has never been satis-

factorily explained. Stukeley thought it the ditch of an older camp, Hoare considered it had been dug merely to obtain earth for the rampart which is in parts forty-six feet high. In this rampart are three entrances—south, west, and east; that to the east, the principal, being fortified by outworks. Of old, this great earthwork was known as Chlorus' Camp, and attributed to the father of the Emperor Constantine the Great, and in some inexplicable etymological dream, Clarendon and its palace were connected with it. But Figsbury Rings is not a work of the Roman period, nothing Roman has ever been found in it, though the Roman road between Old Sarum and Winchester runs by but half a mile to the south. The only find here, a bronze leaf-shaped sword, twenty-four inches long, now in the Ashmolean Museum, suggests that Figsbury is rather a work of the Bronze Age than Roman.

Beneath Figsbury and very visible from that high place, Winterbourne Earls lies in the quiet valley beside the stream. It can boast of little but its own delight, for its church is a building of Wyatt's. It has as little artistic interest as its sister over the stream, Winterbourne Dauntsey, which gets its name from the Dauntseys of the western side of the county, who held both these places in the time of Edward I.

Continuing up the valley still on the eastern bank of the stream from Winterbourne Earls, one soon comes to another Winterbourne—Winterbourne Gunner, which gets its name from Gunnora, wife of Henry de la Mere, lord of this manor in the time of Henry III. Winterbourne Gunner has had a better fate than its sisters, for it has kept its old church, which is delightfully placed and beautiful in itself if only for its simplicity. It has escaped the destruction its sisters suffered—hardly, however. Not so very long ago it is said the chancel roof fell in, and the church in consequence was closed for fourteen years. To-day the chancel has a flat ceiling, but the main part of the church remains to bless us as we come in. What we see is a building consisting of nave, chancel, south porch and western tower. Of old, it boasted too a south aisle, but this has been pulled down, fortunately leaving untouched the arcade of Transitional Norman work of two bays with curious octagonal central pillar and square capitals. The new south wall encloses this, and a new roof covers the old, which is of the fourteenth century, as, I think, is the south door. The chancel arch is Transitional

Norman. As for the chancel whose roof fell in—was it in 1810 when the north wall was rebuilt?—in so far as it is old, it is of the fourteenth century with a charming single light trefoil headed window of that time in the south side. The east window, alas! is modern; but north of the chancel arch there are remains of an early fresco. As we see it, the church dates from the end of the twelfth, or early thirteenth, century; but a very early Norman window now built into the outside of the north wall of the nave points to the existence of an earlier church. The dedication is in honour of St. Mary.

Just here at Winterbourne Gunner we seem to come upon traces of the old Roman road between Old Sarum and Silchester, the Portway. The village of Porton, half a mile up the valley from Winterbourne, might certainly seem to get its name from the Way, but it is hard to decide where the old road crossed the stream. There is a ford at Porton, but owing to the winding of the river, it runs not east and west, but north and south, and is curiously awkward for a road running north-east and south-west. Taking this into consideration with the known alignment of the way, parts of which south-west and north-east of the river still seem to remain, we may think, perhaps, that the Portway forded the Bourne at Gambledon, close to Winterbourne rather than at Porton. If this be so where the road forks beyond Winterbourne Gunner, the upper and eastern limb may well be the old Roman road. At any rate, it passes the church and wonderfully avoids, and only just, the awkward curves of the stream—one of the marks, I think, of a Roman work.

Porton itself is without much interest, its church is entirely modern even in its site, but some interesting prehistoric finds have been made about a mile south of the station in a large bell-shaped barrow.[1]

If Porton cannot hold us, we shall linger the longer at Idmiston, a mile further up the valley on the same side of the stream, which boasts quite the most interesting church in this valley; indeed, Idmiston Church is one of the rarest and loveliest village churches in the county, not only because in large part it is a Decorated building, and such are rare in Wiltshire, but because it is of very fine workmanship.

Dedicated in honour of All Saints, the church consists of clerestoried nave with aisles, chancel, north porch, and western

[1] *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xxxiii. p. 410.

tower. The tower is the oldest part of the church, for it is still in part Norman. From it one looks into the church through three arches, of which that leading into the nave, like that which looks into the south aisle, was rebuilt in the fourteenth century. Both these arches still retain Norman fragments. The northern arch is of the late fifteenth century. In the chancel we still have a delightful work of the early thirteenth century with a triple lancet window at the east end and two lancets in the north and two in the south walls. A piscina of the same date is in the south wall here; the roof, like that of the nave, is modern, and so is the chancel arch.

It is in the aisles and the nave that we find the rare beauty of the church. These, with the porch, are pure fourteenth century works, and of a very lovely kind. Nothing, indeed, could be more beautiful than the arcades in their entire simplicity, with their clustered columns, their moulded capitals and bases and corbels, and the roofs of the aisles, the clerestory of the nave. Nor could we wish for anything more delightful than the two-storeyed porch. And what are we to say of the exquisite carvings of the roof corbels, those lovely heads of men and women and angels, with here a grotesque, there a nun telling her beads? They are too dear for praise. Happy is he who may call Idmiston his home, for it has a perfect sanctuary; happy is he who was christened at that font made in the fourteenth century of Purbeck marble, and who, while the parson droned through his sermon, could watch as a child the spring sunshine play upon that old Caroline tomb of Giles Rowbach (ob. 1633) at the west end of the south aisle—an alley of beauty. Here in this delicious sanctuary old Don Bowle of Don Quixote fame, a good Spanish scholar, taught his people what time Wyatt was breaking up Salisbury Cathedral with the assistance of Bishop Barrington.

In the valley by Idmiston the road by which we have come so far up this Bourne valley crosses the stream for the first time, and so leads us into Boscombe.

Boscombe should be famous; it hides its light. Yet it was here in this far village that one of the greatest prose works in the literature of England was written, a work whose wonderful cadences are as lovely as anything of the sort attempted in our language; here Richard Hooker wrote his book "Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Politie." Was it something in the air here, so

thin and pure and musical upon the high Downs, that taught the only serious defender the English Church ever had the majestic rhythm which in itself is a powerful argument; or did he bring the secret from the West Country where he was born?

"Though for no other cause yet for this; that posteritie may know we have not loosely through silence permitted things to passe away as in a dreame, there shall be for mens information extant thus much concerning the present state of the Church of God established among us, and their careful endeavour which would have upheld the same. . . ."

Did ever book begin so majestically? Ah, it is easy to see that Hooker loved antiquity like that uncle who educated him. What an irony that he should have had to devote his time to defending with every ancient beauty of art and intellect so brand new a thing! Yet he carries, as it were in spite of himself, his own refutation, and that in a single sentence, one of those long sentences which he knew so well how to handle, and used with joy as a soldier a sword, his whole life long:—

"He that goeth about to persuade a multitude that they are not so well governed as they ought to be shall never want attentive and favourable Hearers; because they know the manifold defects whereunto every kind of Regiment is subject, but the secret lets and difficulties which in publicke proceedings are innumerable and inevitable they have not ordinarily the judgment to consider."

That marvellous opening of the First Booke, a beautiful, long-drawn trumpet note such as no one to-day can blow, let him try as he will, was conceived here in Boscombe, for to the living of St. Andrew, Boscombe, was Richard Hooker presented by Archbishop Whitgift in 1591. He remained here till 1595. And, let us rejoice, it is his church we see. The eyes of that great artist have rested upon these very walls which are of the fourteenth century, upon these windows—but not those in the walls of the chancel. He has often passed out of that priest's door in the south wall there under that semi-circular arch with the sundial cut in it and marked the hour; and, maybe, it was he who had that little window opened to light the pulpit. Certainly he altered the church; it was he who built the Elizabethan transept to the north of the nave, but, alas! he did not preach from the pulpit we see, for it is of the seventeenth century, as are the old pews, a few of which remain.

But Boscombe is not the only parish in this valley to boast a famous theologian as rector. In the neighbouring Allington,

Nicholas Fuller was rector about 1591. "Ecclesiola" he called the place rather than "ecclesia," for the means was so small; yet the duties were light, and it was here he began those studies of languages, especially in their connection with theology, which made him famous. He too published a majestical work, not in the English tongue, but in Latin, which bore as title "*Miscellanearum Theologicarum, quibus non modo scripturae divinae sed et aliorum classicorum auctorum plurima monumenta explicantur atque illustrantur, libri tres.*" It seems too great and heavy a thing to have come out of Allington and the Bourne valley. He published it rightly at Heidelberg in 1612, and in the same year was given a Prebend's stall in Sarum Cathedral.

Beyond Allington a byway, which keeps to the vale, leads one in a long mile to Newton Tony, where the church is only worth seeing because it contains a Norman font. The fine Jacobean house, Wilbury House in the park close by, was built by one of the Benson family, an ancestor of that "Counsellor" Benson (1682–1754), the critic and politician, the "professed admirer of Milton," who in 1737 erected in honour of his favourite poet the monument in Westminster Abbey, and gave William Dobson £1,000 for a translation of "Paradise Lost" into Latin verse, the first volume of which was sumptuously published by the Sheldonian Press at Oxford, and a copy in small quarto of which I bought at Livorno for a *lira* many years ago. The beautiful medal Benson had engraved in honour of Milton appears on the title. The date of the edition is 1750. The second volume was published in 1753 by James Bettenham of London: it consists of Books VII.–XII., and is dedicated to George Pitt. The first volume is splendidly dedicated by Dobson to his patron:

"Spectatissimo Viro
GUILIELMO BENSON armigero
Serenissimo Mag. Britann. Regi
A Rationibus Publicis;
Literarum Patrono,
Erudito, Candido, Munifico;
Hanc
Eximii Pictoris
A MILTONO Sacro conscripti
Locupletationem,
Sub Ipsius Auspiciis susceptam
Sarisbiæ cum Observantia
D. D. D.
GUILIELMUS DOBSON."

That is another amazing thing to have come out of the Bourne valley, and certainly more curious than anything else in its history. For surely it is wonderful that anyone should translate "Paradise Lost" into Latin hexameters, and still more wonderful that anyone should think thereby that he conferred immortality upon it and did a public service. For my part I bought it in Livorno as a curiosity *Teatri Sheldoniani*; I never thought to know any more of it, and here I come into the little Bourne valley and chance upon its history.

Beyond Newton Tony, you come into that country which has been occupied here on the Plain by the British Army, really to the exclusion of any other interest whatever. Moreover, if you follow the Bourne valley to Cholderton, where there is only a new church, but a fine old seventeenth century mansion, Cholderton House, the road leads you, nor can you avoid it, right over a great headland of Hampshire four miles wide jutting out westward into Wiltshire. There lies Shipton Bellinger in the high valley; but at South Tidworth again you enter Wiltshire, and still keeping to the valley of the Bourne through North Tidworth, presently come to the Collingbournes—the goal of your travel.

The Tidworths, North and South, are the headquarters of the Southern Military Command, and save for the Army established there, offer you little to see; but at Collingbourne Ducis you are in truth on the Downs, and both Collingbourne Ducis and Collingbourne Kingston have something to show well worth seeing.

Collingbourne Ducis, a windy place, Collingbourne of the Duchy of Lancaster, that is, for it was one of its possessions, has a long history from Domesday Book to the Reformation, when Henry VIII. granted it to Protector Somerset and Elizabeth to the Earl of Hertford, in memory of whose son, Edward St. Maur, a brass with curious inscription may still be seen in the church. The church is rather pretty than charming, an Early English building, with a Perpendicular tower, thoroughly spoiled.

Beyond Collingbourne Ducis lies Collingbourne Sutton, which to-day is known as Sunton, a wonderful telescope word, and the Collingbournes finally end at Collingbourne Kingston, where there is a church better worth seeing than that at Ducis, but of a similar sort, that is to say, a restored Early English building

with Perpendicular additions. It possesses, too, even a better brass than the church of Collingbourne Ducis, for whereas that dates from 1631, this goes back to 1404, commemorating Constantine Darell. There is, too, a fine, if elaborate seventeenth century canopied monument to Sir Gilbert Pile of Collingbourne and his wife (1626). But even here the Bourne valley must keep up its character for the production or the harbouring of "Divines." And so it is that in the parsonage of Collingbourne Kingston there was born the curious mystic and Platonist, John Norris, in 1657, who became rector of Bemerton, sacred to the memory of George Herbert; a remarkable man, the last of the Cambridge Platonists.

Some two and a half miles over the spacious barrowed downs west of Collingbourne Ducis stands Everley, an ancient place whose manor having long been parcel of the Duchy of Lancaster was granted in 1547 to Protector Somerset. When he was executed for treason the King granted Everley to Sir Ralph Falconer, his chief Secretary of State, afterwards falconer to Queen Elizabeth and gaoler of Mary Queen of Scots at Tetbury Castle. This Sir Ralph built Everley House, and his descendants enjoyed the property till 1618. The manor next belonged to Sir John Evelyn of West Dean, and passed through the hands of several owners before in 1764 it was bought by Sir John Astley. It is of the builder of Everley House, Sir Ralph Sadleir, however, that we think upon these windy downs, where the sport he loved still flourishes as nowhere else in England. He was a great falconer, so fond of hawking that even when he was at Tetbury guarding Queen Mary of Scots "he could not refrain from it," we read, "nor from allowing his prisoner to participate in the sport for which he was severely reprimanded." His portrait is still said to hang in Everley House, but he lies at Hungerford. The house was much injured by fire in 1881, and the church was rebuilt a hundred years ago.

From Everley a road runs south-east across the Bourne valley to Ludgershall, passing some little distance southward Sidbury Hill, near which King Ine is said to have had a hunting lodge. Ludgershall is a high and pleasant place of great antiquity, the only place in this part of the county which Leland seems to have visited. With his usual happiness he sums it up in a few words, telling all that is essential about it: "Luggershaull sumtyme a castle of Wilteshyre ten miles from Marleborow and

a four miles from Andover almoste in the waye betwixt. The castell stoode in a parke now clene doune. There is of late times a pratie lodge made by the ruines of it and longgithe to the king."

I call Ludgershall ancient, for its old name was Lutegar's Hill, and it was evidently the home of some Saxon lord. At the Conquest it was held by Edward of Salisbury, but seems to have come to the Crown ; at any rate it and its castle were in the King's hands from the time of Henry II. It was often the



Ludgershall Church.

custom to let Marlborough Castle and Ludgershall Castle go together and to appoint one governor for both. In this castle in 1141 the Empress Maud took refuge from Stephen ; the seal of her great partisan, Milo of Hereford, was found in the neighbourhood some years ago. Then came King Richard. He granted the castle of Ludgershall to his brother John, who was there in person in 1212. So things went on for the most part obscurely enough till in 1540 Leland tells us that the park in which the castle till then had stood, a part within the Forest of Chute, was " clene doune," at least, that is how I read it ; others think " clene doune " refers to the castle. In any case

the castle was then ruined and a lodge had been built of its ruins, and soon after this was granted to Sir Richard Brydges, who died in 1558, and to whom there is a broken monument in the church.

Of the castle little remains, a fragment of the Norman keep at the northern end of the village now forming part of farm buildings. It was evidently erected within an ancient British camp. By the inn there still stands the lofty shaft of an ancient cross sculptured with representations on the base or head of the Crucifixion and so forth; it was of old the market cross, for Ludgershall was a market borough, and till the Reform Bill returned two members to Parliament.

The church is ancient and should not be missed; it dates from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, has no chancel arch, like a Devonshire church, and can boast in a window of the arms of Archbishop Chicheley, to say nothing of the fine, if dilapidated, tomb of Sir Richard Brydges, with its curious representation of angels receiving the soul of the departed.

It was evening when I made my way into Amesbury.



Little Amesbury.

CHAPTER VI

AMESBURY

AMESBURY is not only the chief but the oldest place in the upper valley of the Avon, nor rightly understood is there any town or village in all Wiltshire more to be loved, and this not only on account of its beauty—and it is among the most delicious, deeply embosomed in woods in all the loveliness of that fair vale—but chiefly on account of its vast age, its sacred and romantic associations which go back to our very origins and remind us of all that out of which we are come.

Amesbury, Ambresbury, Ambrosebury, possibly derives its name from the Aurelius Ambrosius called Emrys by Welsh writers, who about 440 was a leader of the Britons and of whose history, as about everything else in this country at the opening of the Dark Ages, nothing really certain can be extracted from the mass of legend. Gildas speaks of him with

enthusiasm, but indefinitely as the leader who checked the victorious advance of the Saxon pirates. He describes Ambrosius as "courteous, faithful, valiant, and true, a man of Roman birth who had alone survived the conflict, his kindred who had worn the purple having perished in the struggle; his descendants, greatly degenerated in these days from the excellence of their ancestors, still provoke their conquerors to battle, and by the grace of God their prayers for victory are heard." In explanation of Gildas' assertion that "his kindred had worn the purple," Geoffrey of Monmouth and others represent Ambrosius as the son of that Constantine who was elected emperor in Britain, Gaul and Spain during the reign of the Emperor Honorius (395–423), but, alas! little credence can be given to their statements. The story of Geoffrey himself is somewhat as follows: Aurelius Ambrosius and Uther Pendragon were the sons by a Roman wife of Constantine, who was murdered by Vortigern when he had reigned for ten years. Their father being dead, Ambrosius and Uther Pendragon fled to the King of Armorica, but returned after some years, during which Vortigern, as king of Britain, had been forced to call the Jutes under Hengist and Horsa to his aid against the Picts. On his return Ambrosius was anointed king, and attacking Vortigern killed him at Genoren. Ambrosius then faced Hengist, whom he also defeated, though with great loss at Maisbeli. Soon after Hengist was put to death, and Ambrosius reigned for some years till he was poisoned at Winchester, where he lay sick, by a Saxon disguised as a physician.

In all this what certainty is there? It would appear likely that Ambrosius was indeed of Roman origin, and even that he was descended from Constantine, and that he led the Romano-British chiefs against the Saxon pirates.

What is interesting in this legend with regard to Amesbury is this: that it was there after the battle of Maisbeli Ambrosius buried the Romano-British nobles who had fallen, and that it was there too he himself later found a tomb.

But there is more than this. That Ambrosius should have chosen Amesbury—a place as it were of national sepulchre—presupposes that the spot was holy and famous. As a fact tradition connects Amesbury with Glastonbury as one of the earliest centres of Christianity in our island. The Welsh Triads mention Amesbury as one of three great religious centres

established in the early years of the Christian era. "The three chief perpetual choirs of Britain—the choir of Llan Iltud Vaur in Glamorgan, the choir of Ambrosius in Amesbury, and the choir of Glastonbury—in each of these choirs there were 2,400 saints; that is, there were 100 for every hour of the day and night in rotation perpetuating the praise of God without rest or intermission." Quite apart from this evidence, such as it is, it might seem certain that the immediate neighbourhood of Stonehenge, which must have been well-known through all southern Britain as a spot sacred to Pagan rites, would be one of the first places chosen by Christian missionaries for the foundation of a church.[1] It might seem probable, therefore, that perhaps as early as the first century a religious centre was established here from Glastonbury only thirty miles away over the Downs.[2] Whether this were so or not only excavation can decide; but it is doubtful whether even the spade would teach us much, certainly at Glaston it has revealed little or nothing of that earliest settlement. Of the very earliest Amesbury then we have scarcely a hint, but it is evident that tradition has strongly connected Ambrosius with the place, as I have shown, and if he were not the founder—and this is to be hoped—he was certainly the refounder of the place. There he buried his chiefs, and there according to the legend he himself was interred.

It would seem probable that at this time the religious community at Amesbury consisted as it certainly did later, and as we have reason to believe was also the case at Glaston, of two communities, that is of monks and nuns. It is not likely that Ambrosius would have buried his warriors or have laid himself down in a nunnery, and as it happens we have a strong tradition of the existence here, in the sixth century at any rate, of a famous nunnery, the mother of those which came later.

The whole glory and fame of Amesbury for most of us is summed up in the name of Guinevere. It was here she took the

[1] *Cf.* Mr. Kite's articles in *Wilts. Notes and Queries*, iii. (1899–1901), p. 114 *et seq.* No writer I have been able to find, however, has attempted to deal with the Romano-British church of Amesbury. It is a fascinating subject.

[2] For an account of the early church of Glaston see my *Highways and Byways in Somerset* (1912).

veil, when Arthur, who was the son of Uther Pendragon, the brother of Ambrosius, died, here she became abbess, here she died, and here Lancelot found her dead and bore her body across the Downs to Glastonbury to lay it beside Arthur's.

What the Iliad was to the Greeks, what the Æneid was to the Romans, the Mort d'Arthur, the Arthurian legend is to us, that is to say, the holiest of our memories — the mystery out of which we are come. And still at least in the west country there be some who say that King Arthur is not dead, but had by the will of Our Lord Jesus into another place, and men say that he will come again and he shall win the Holy Cross. For he is the soul of England; that soul, which as Malory and his "French book" tell us, changes but cannot die. And many men say that there is written upon his tomb this verse: *Hic jacet Arthurus, Rex quondam, Rexque futurus.*

As for Guinevere; "when Queen Guinevere understood that King Arthur was slain and all the noble knights, Sir Mordred and all the remnant, then the Queen stole away, and five ladies with her, and so she went to Almesbury; and there she let make herself a nun and wore white clothes and black, and great penance she took, as ever did sinful lady in this land, and never creature could make her merry; but lived in fasting, prayers, and alms deeds, that all manner of people marvelled how virtuously she was changed. Now leave we Queen Guinevere in Almesbury, a nun in white clothes and black, and there she was Abbess and ruler as reason would; and turn we from her and speak we of Sir Launcelot du Lake."

Sir Launcelot was then at Dover Castle and when he heard of the death of the King, "I will myself ride and seek my lady Queen Guinevere," said he, "for as I hear say she hath had great pain and much disease; and I heard say that she is fled into the west . . . . So he departed and rode westerly, and there he sought a seven or eight days and at the last he came to a nunnery, and there was Queen Guinevere ware of Sir Launcelot as he walked in the cloister. And when she saw him there she swooned thrice that all the ladies and gentlewomen had work enough to hold the Queen up." There as we know she parted from him and required him "for all the love that ever was betwixt us that thou never see me more in the visage; and I command thee in God's behalf, that thou forsake my

company and to thy kingdom thou turn again, for as well as I have loved thee, mine heart will not serve me to see thee . . . . therefore Sir Launcelot, go to thy realm, and there take thee a wife, and live with her with joy and bliss . . . ."

There in the cloister at Amesbury Sir Launcelot, looking his last upon her living, swore to make him a monk as she had made her a nun. Thence he set out and came to the hermitage where the Archbishop of Canterbury was, and having endured great penance for six years, he took the habit on him, and when a twelvemonth he had sung Mass, " upon a night there came a vision to Sir Launcelot, and charged him in remission of his sins to hasten him to Almesbury. 'And by then thou come there thou shalt find Queen Guinevere dead. And therefore take thy fellows with thee and purvey them of an horse-bier, and fetch thou the corpse of her and bury her by her husband, the noble King Arthur.'

" Then Sir Launcelot rose up a day . . . . and took his eight fellows with him and on foot they yede from Glastonbury to Almesbury, the which is little more than thirty miles. And thither they came within two days for they were weak and feeble to go. And when Sir Launcelot was come to Almesbury within the nunnery, Queen Guinevere died but half an hour afore. And the ladies told Sir Launcelot that Queen Guinevere told them all as she passed, that Sir Launcelot had been priest near a twelvemonth, and hither he cometh as fast as he may to fetch my corpse; and beside my lord King Arthur he shall bury me. Wherefore the Queen said in hearing of them all: I beseech Almighty God that I may never have power to see Sir Launcelot with my worldly eyen; and this, said all the ladies, was ever her prayer these two days, till she was dead. Then Sir Launcelot saw her visage, but he wept not greatly, but sighed. And so he did all the observances of the service himself both the *dirige* and on the morn he sang Mass. And there was ordained an horse bier; and so with an hundred torches ever burning about the corpse of the Queen, and ever Sir Launcelot with his eight fellows went about the horse bier, singing and reading many an holy orison, and frankincense upon the corpse incensed. Thus Sir Launcelot and his eight fellows went on foot from Almesbury unto Glastonbury. And when they were come to the chapel and the hermitage, there she had a *dirige* with great devotion. And on the morrow the hermit that



Cardinal, Amesbury Abbey.

sometime was Bishop of Canterbury, sang the Mass of Requiem with great devotion. And Sir Launcelot was the first that

offered, and then also his eight fellows. And then she was wrapped in cered cloth of Raines, from top to toe, in thirty fold; and after she was put in a web of lead, and then in a coffin of marble. And when she was put in the earth Sir Launcelot swooned and lay long still, while the hermit came and awaked him and said: ye be to blame for ye displease God with such manner of sorrow-making. Truly said Sir Launcelot, I trust I do not displease God for He knoweth mine intent. For my sorrow was not, nor is not, for any rejoicing of sin, but my sorrow may never have end. For when I remember of her beauty, and of her noblesse, that was both with her king and with her, so when I saw his corpse and her corpse so lie together, truly mine heart would not serve to sustain my careful body. Also I remember me how by my default, mine orgule, and my pride, that they were both laid full low, that were peerless that ever was living of Christian people; wit you well, said Sir Launcelot, this remembered, of her kindnesse and mine unkindness, sank so to mine heart that I might not sustain myself. So the French book maketh mention."

There we have all we shall ever know of the famous nunnery of Amesbury; there too we have the last of it—of that great and sacred shrine of Romano-British Christianity. I say there we have the last of it. For why after all did Sir Launcelot at so great cost ride so far to bring away the body of the Queen, even from so holy a place? Not surely in order that he of all men, priest though he then was, might lay that golden head on Arthur's pillow. We shall find the reason of it if we ask ourselves why the Archbishop was in hiding then, and in hiding at Glastonbury. According to the Saxon Chronicle, in the year 495, a new invasion of Britain was achieved by Cerdic and Cymric, who seem to have landed in Southampton Water. By then all Kent was surely in the hands of these pagans. Slowly they now subdued Hampshire and part of Wiltshire, and about the year 516 were signally defeated in the battle of Mons Badonicus, by Arthur and his knights. But Arthur passed away, the resistance was breaking up, and when at last Old Sarum fell to the invaders in 552, the church of Amesbury was in danger, and it had like more eastern sanctuaries to be deserted; therefore Launcelot came and took up the precious dust of Guinevere and bore it across the Downs into the sanc-

tuary of the marshes and the meres, to the island of Glaston, where it lies for ever beside Arthur's.[1]

The famous convent where Queen Guinevere had been abbess thus disappears under the shadow of the heathen pirates. The ignorance of the academic historians of our country, fearful lest their vested interests should be shaken by the truth and the memory of Rome and of Roman Christianity, will have it that it is from these barbarians we and our civilisation are descended. It is not so; we are neolithic, and were here long before the Saxons came to the land. Amesbury and Glaston are our shrines and holy places, the shrines of a Roman and a Catholic Christianity which the pirates threatened. Amesbury they destroyed. It was lost under the pagan flood in the darkness of the Dark Ages, and when Rome once more lifted the veil, when St. Austin came to Canterbury and St. Birinus set out to convert a heathen Wessex, Amesbury was not. Perhaps a memory of it, of its rare romance, a glint of the golden hair of Guinevere, lingered in the place; always of course hard by there were the Stones, witnesses of something so old that no man could define it. From whatever cause in the year 980, Amesbury was refounded, and by that Ethelfrida who was the Queen dowager of King Edgar. There is a rumour that long before then, even in Alfred's day, a house of religious had stood here, and that it was one of the two monasteries which were given to Asser by King Alfred. We know, and can know nothing of that. The new Amesbury was founded by Queen Ethelfrida in the year 980 as a convent of nuns, and commended to the patronage of the Blessed Virgin and St. Melorus, curiously enough a Cornish saint and martyr, murdered by his pagan brother in the year 411. His relics were here, it was thought; though how or why they were brought hither has never been explained. Ethelfrida founded the convent of Amesbury as she did that of Wherwell, whither she retired, in expiation of the murder at Corfe Castle of St. Edward king and martyr, who was her son-in-law. Thus she made clear the road to the throne for her son and Edgar's, Etheldred. The story is an old one, but as it directly relates to the foundation of Amesbury, it had better be told again. In the words of Wil-

[1] There is credible historical record of the exhumation and reburial of the bodies in the time of Edward I. See my *Highways and Byways in Somerset* (1912), p. 161.

liam of Malmesbury: "King Edward was returning home tired with the chase and gasping with thirst from the exercise, while his companions were following the dogs in different directions as it happened, when hearing that his step-mother and her infant son dwelt in a neighbouring mansion, he proceeded thither at full speed, unattended and unsuspecting, as he judged of others by his own feelings. On his arrival, alluring him to her with female blandishment she made him lean forward, and after saluting him, while he was eagerly drinking from the cup which had been presented, the dagger of an attendant pierced him through. Dreadfully wounded with all his remaining strength he clapped spurs to his horse in order to join his companions; when one foot slipping, he was dragged by the other through the trackless paths and recesses of the wood, while the streaming blood gave evidence of his death to his followers. They then commanded him to be ingloriously buried at Wareham; envying him even holy ground when dead, as they had envied him his royal dignity living." Ethelfrida, the same chronicler records for us, was a beautiful woman, and perhaps in her crime we may find the explanation of the dedication of the convent of Amesbury in honour of St. Melorus. It may be that it was especially in expiation of her own cruelty that she founded Wherwell, where she ended her days, and that it was on her son's behalf, who had murdered his brother, that she founded Amesbury, and placed it in the protection of a saint who had suffered too from a brother's hatred. As Robert of Gloucester sings:

> "Yet Elfrid the luther queene that Seynt Edward slough
> Of hure trespas bifore hure dethe repentant was ynoug;
> And rered two Nonneryes, Wherwell that one was
> And Ambresbury that othere to beete hure trespas."

The convent of Amesbury endured for just two hundred years. It was of the Benedictine Order, as became its foundation, and continued a famous and independent house till the time of Henry II. In 1177—was it the memory of Guinevere's hair, did her dear sin after all haunt the place?—the evil lives of the abbess and nuns drew upon them the royal displeasure, for the convent was a royal foundation as we have seen. The abbess was especially wayward, and it was considered right to dissolve the community. The nuns, some thirty in number, were dispersed in other convents, the abbess was

allowed to go where she chose, with a pension of ten marks. So once more Amesbury was desolate.



Gatehouse and River, Amesbury Abbey.

Not for long, however. In or about that very year the house was given to the king's favourite abbey of Fontrevault in

Anjou, whence a prioress and twenty-four nuns were brought and established at Amesbury.

Now the Benedictine congregation of Fontrevault, the most important and the longest lived of those few Benedictine congregations which have ceased to exist, was founded by Robert of Arbrissel at the end of the eleventh century. Coëval with Citeaux, and anterior to all the other great reforms save only Vallombrosa and Cluny, it endured with great splendour for six hundred years. No religious congregation has attained to greater eminence and even wealth. It was a part of the institution of Robert of Arbrissel to make this congregation one of penitentiaries for the retreat and the restoration of women of evil life. The rule of course was the Benedictine, but with especial constitutions, and the Order was a double one, that is to say, it comprehended houses for men and women. The abbess was, however, General of the Order, its spiritual and temporal Superior, exempt from the authority of the ordinary. She administered the property of the community, ruled and judged it, chose the confessors for her houses both of women and men. No novice could be received without her permission, and all nuns and monks alike made their profession between her hands and swore allegiance to her. Fontrevault was indeed as completely and fundamentally feudal as Cluny: it was a female Cluny. Everywhere was the superiority of the woman. The prioress was above the prior, the nuns above the monks, just as the abbess herself was above the abbot. This absolute subordination was the intention of the founder, who placed the order under the protection of the Blessed Virgin and St. John "wishing that the authority which Christ gave to Mary on the Cross should be the model of the relation which he established between the women and men of his congregation." And he himself was the first to set the example. The great mother house in which Henry II. of England and Cœur de Lion lie together, endured till the Revolution, when it was swept away, desecrated by the mob, and its library dispersed.

It was this great mixed congregation which Henry II. established at Amesbury. The nuns wore the white habit and rochet with a black cowl,[1] and the monks tilled the fields, the nuns receiving everything as of right; even the broken

[1] *Cf.* Malory's description of Guinevere's habit.

food of the monks had to be returned to the nunnery for distribution to the poor.

There was thus at Amesbury a double monastery, a convent and a monastery ruled by a prioress, with a prior under her orders. The first prioress, Johanna de Gennes, from Fontrevault, was inducted by Richard archbishop of Canterbury in the presence of King Henry II., the bishop of Exeter and others, and from the beginning the house became one of the favourite retreats of the ladies of the English nobility. The list even of royal ladies who were "humble nuns of Fontrevault" here is a long one, and includes Eleanor of Brittany, daughter of Geoffrey Plantagenet, third son of Henry II., and sister of Prince Arthur; Eleanor Queen Dowager of Henry III., who was buried at Amesbury, King Edward I. coming from Scotland for the occasion; Princess Mary, daughter of Edward I., of whose reception an interesting account is on record[1]; and Leonora, her half-sister. So the great house endured in honour until the Reformation.

As early as 1535, we read, an attempt had been made on the part of Cromwell's emissaries to persuade the prioress voluntarily to surrender her monastery into the King's hands, but she steadily refused. All she would say was, "If the King's highness command me to go from this house, I will go though I beg my bread; and as for pension I care for none." But this steadfastness only delayed matters; the Royal mandate arrived at length. What were six hundred years for the Blue Beard of English history; what was the property of nuns to him? All we know of the tragedy here that was being repeated more than six hundred times all over England, is contained in the following pathetic letter from Florence Bormewe, the last prioress of Amesbury to the Lord Cromwell:—

"RIGHT HONOURABLE, MY SINGULAR GOOD LORD;

"I humbly recommend me unto your good lordship, and have received the King's most gracious letters and yours touching the resignation of my poor office in the monastery of Amesbury; according to the purport of which letters and your good advertisement I have resigned my said office into the hands of the King's noble grace, before the commissioners thereto appointed; trusting that such promises as the same commissioners have

[1] Mrs. Green's *Lives of the Princesses of England*, II. p. 405.

made unto me for assurance of my living hereafter shall be performed. And so I most humbly beseech your good lordship, in the way of charity to be means for me unto the king's highness, that I may be put in surety of my said living during the little time that it shall please God so to grant me to live. And I shall continually during my time pray to God for the preservation of the king's most excellent noble grace and your honourable estate long to endure. At the poor monastery of Ambresbury the 10th day of this present month, August."

The monastery and its precincts, with gardens, orchards, fishponds, covered twelve acres. We have no plan of the buildings, are even doubtful where precisely they stood, but they with their lands were granted in the fatal year—let us not date it Anno Domini, but call it by his name whose dark crime will for ever stain it, 31 Henry VIII.—to Edward Seymour the Protector Somerset, who swallowed so many of the like in southern England. This great rogue pulled down the monastery and stripped and spoliated the church for the sake of its lead. Do you think he could endure? He met the end he so richly deserved on Tower Hill. See the multitude of the names of those who have held Amesbury for a few years; they do not endure here. Somerset's son got it but presently it passed, it passed, it passed, by marriage now and then, most often by sale to the Ailesburys, the Boyles, the Queensberys. In 1824, Sir Edmund Antrobus bought it, and with his family it still remains; but I see it is once more for sale. How many hands has it passed through since the nuns who had held it for six hundred years were turned out, and what had been God's house was thrown to a traitor?

What the traitor and his son, having destroyed all that we would have given a king's ransom to possess, built here I know not. It endured as short a time as they. Then in 1660 Webb built from Inigo Jones' designs a noble mansion, "one of the earliest examples of the type on which nine-tenths of the seats of the English gentry were afterwards erected." Even that was altered e'er long; but even so do you think it could endure? In 1840 (blessed date) the second Antrobus, baronet, largely rebuilt it, as it happened for our gain, in so far as this goes, that it was then some discoveries of tiles and other things revealed the fact that the mansion stood probably on the site of the monastery. In the old house that was then destroyed, however, we lose more than we gain. Not only was it noble in itself, but it was distinguished by beauty and

talent, the beauty of that delicious Duchess of Queensbery, of whom Prior sang:

"Thus Kitty, beautiful and young
And mild as colt untam'd
Bespoke the fair from whence she sprung
With little rage inflamed;

Inflamed with rage at sad restraint
Which wise mamma ordain'd,
And sorely vex'd to play the saint
Whilst wit and beauty reign'd.

'Shall I thumb holy books, confined
With Abigail, forsaken?
Kitty's for other things designed
Or I am much mistaken.

Must Lady Jenny frisk about
And visit with her cousins?
At balls must she make all the rout
And bring home hearts by dozens?

What has she better, pray, than I?
What hidden charms to boast,
That all mankind for her should die
Whilst I am scarce a toast?

Dearest mamma, for once let me
Unchained my future try,
I'll have my Earl as well as she
Or know the reason why.'

Fondness prevailed—mamma gave way
Kitty at heart's desire
Obtained the chariot for a day
And set the world on fire."

Well, Kitty got her Earl, or rather a Duke, and was reasonably happy, in spite of the premature death of her two sons. Hers was the beauty. The talent was Gay's, who here, as her guest, wrote his *Beggar's Opera*. His room, overlooking the Avon, a curious stone summer house, is still to be seen in the grounds.

But in spite of such memories, fragile enough to be sure, it is not of the usurpers we think at Amesbury Abbey, but of the rightful inmates, the nuns and monks of the curious double cloister.

What is there left of it? Nothing; even its site, in spite of Mr. Kite's researches, remains conjectural. It is possible that the oldest house of all in which Guinevere was abbess stood upon "the ramparts," that mighty British earthwork which is popularly known as Vespasian's Camp, though certainly Vespasian had nothing to do with it. It is a vast affair occupying the apex of the down there, with the Avon on two sides of it, and partly mutilated, nobly covered with wood and com-



Amesbury Church.

prising not less than thirty-nine acres. In such a place was Old Sarum built, and here may have stood Queen Guinevere's convent.

It is certain, however, that the convents of 980 and 1177 stood below this in the great vallum which now forms the grounds of the mansion. Only nothing remains; nothing, that is, save the beautiful, though mutilated church, which may have been that of the convent, both of the nuns and monks, or of either, and have been shared with them by the people as their parish church. It is an interesting suggestion and might

seem likely enough, but we have little or nothing to allow us to come to a decision about it.

What we see is a large cruciform building of Early English character, with a low central tower and a curious two-storied building attached to the north transept. It is interesting enough, but on closer inspection proves less wonderful than a first glance suggests. For the whole building was restored in the middle of the nineteenth century by Butterworth, and again not long ago. It is difficult to make anything of its curious insincerity; but in its own days before it was spoiled it must have been one of the loveliest Early English churches in the country, and the beautiful Decorated windows in the chancel can but have added to its glory. It stood beside Avon with the monastic buildings behind it, and must in bygone days have filled many a man's heart with its beauty and joy on his way to the old ancient Stones; as now with grief.



Stonehenge.

CHAPTER VII

STONEHENGE

AMESBURY is so fair a place and keeps, though hidden in her heart, so many memories that cannot but be sacred to us, that it would surely be far more famous than it is, but that some two miles away westward, half lost in the vastness of the Plain, there stands what when all is said is, I suppose, the most famous monument in the world—I mean Stonehenge. I call it the most famous monument in the world, and indeed what but the Pyramids of the Pharaohs can compare with it for universal admiration ; it stands, and will stand, as famous as the Alps and as enduring, a thing imagination boggles at, and to account for it whole libraries of books have not been enough, nor has all the ingenuity of man succeeded in reading its secret.

Of its universal fame, its interest for all mankind, the curiosity of all Europe about it, let this instance suffice. Langtoft in his Chronicle tells us of " a wander wit of Wiltshire rambling

to Rome to gaze at antiquities, and there skrewing himself into the company of antiquarians; they entreated him to illustrate unto them that famous monument in his country called Stonage. His answer was that he had never seen, scarce ever heard of it, whereupon they kicked him out of doors and bid him goe home and see Stonage. And I wish—says Langtoft—that all such Episcopal cocks as slight these admired stones and scrape for barley cornes of vanity out of foreigne dunghills might be handled or rather tooled as he was."

If Stonehenge be then, as it is, an universal curiosity, for us Englishmen it is one of the three things in our island—the other two are Land's End and Hadrian's Wall—which each of us must see once in his life; it is a place of pilgrimage very sympathetic to this age, for Stonehenge is the shrine of an unknown God. We go to Land's End half in curiosity, since there we like to think Europe ends westward, half in love and admiration of a place where Nature is so tragically sombre; perhaps, too, some few are drawn thither by a sort of hereditary memory of the long defeats which seem to be recorded in every scarred tor and dolmen. We go to see the Wall in admiration of great Rome who redeemed us from the brute and began our history. But Stonehenge is beyond such memories and such sentiments as these, it stands wholly within the shadow, over the horizon not only of history, but of legend, a lonely and inexplicable thing lost in that vast plain between the sky and the grass, the thin grass of the Downs there, over which the wind whistles so dolefully, where the little birds of the Downs are so curiously few and silent. It stands there we know not why, as the hills do, these low Downs of which indeed it might seem to be the tragic expression and which certainly hold its secret, since they are so populous with our oldest dead. But they keep that secret, and all the wit of man has been too little to resolve it. The place is fabulous, and far more than any Etruscan wall or gateway seems to have been:

> "Piled by the hands of giants
> For god-like kings of old. . ."

and to express something "more harder than the stones of which 'tis raised." Perhaps in all our literature there is but one work which seems to give it any sort of utterance—I mean *King*

Lear. The heath in the night of storm which saw Lear's rage and madness can surely have been none other than this enormous downland so subject to the wind and the rage of the sky; nor can any other stones but these have heard the bitterness of the broken heart of England.

Such is the majesty of this sanctuary; and yet it is most often said that at first sight—and especially now that it is fenced with wire—no great spectacle is more disappointing. It is true that the vastness of the Plain, the immense expanse of the sky, dwarfs any work of man, piled though it be by giant hands; but I confess that I have never been able to conceive of the mind which, coming upon this ruin suddenly on that down-side, should not be immediately overawed by its tragic majesty. What after all is the loneliness of the temples of Paestum to this loneliness? What after all their antiquity? Their beauty moves us as few things may do as we come to them there in the earliest morning beside the sea; but not to pity and terror, only to love. They are a part of our experience. In them we look upon our own childhood. They smile at us across a few golden centuries. We salute them knowing what they are. But who shall recognise in Stonehenge anything that is in his heart? A child there would be like a butterfly within a tomb. We salute the stones only as we shall salute death, not without dread, and we may as soon say what death is as what these are. Darkly they stand, all broken and clean smitten with age, and worn by the wind and the rain of unrecognised millenniums. What ice has striven to break them? What primeval winds have been wrapt about them like endless banners? What rains have beaten upon them in vain? What centuries of summers have covered them with untold glory?

They stand there on the ever-living grass which mocks them, the chattel of time, the victim of that which they would have challenged, chained to the earth rather than towering over it, at the mercy of the years. And about them stretches the great Plain as lonely as they or lonelier, that saw them first upreared, that sees them now in their incredible age, but that has been as they could never be, renewed a thousand times by the countless springs that have torn them slowly down, that laugh still while they are silent, that scorn, even their pretension and boast of antiquity, being as they are eternally older than they. For

this cause Our Lord said: "The meek shall inherit the earth," speaking surely of the flowers.

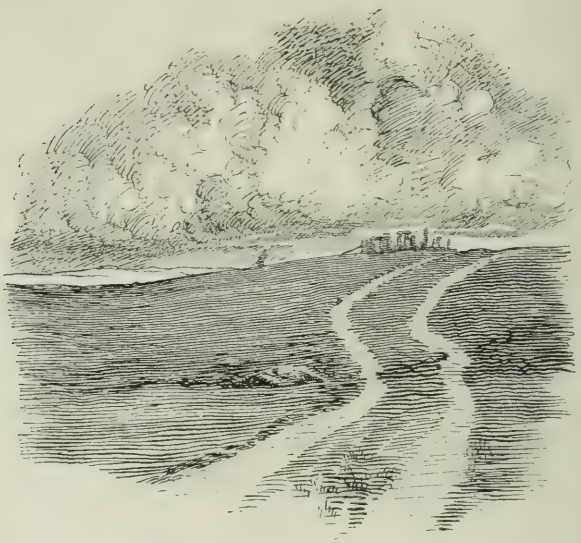
. . . . . .

Stonehenge when it was new—and no man can say when that was—might seem to have consisted of two circles and two ellipses of huge upright stones having a common centre, the one within the other, the two circles surrounding the two ellipses, and the whole being enclosed by a great bank and ditch having a long entry similarly defended. Without this earthwork stood a great single stone and a hippodrome or *cursus*. Such was, it may be thought, the vast monument that was a ruin when history began in our island; but one cannot be at all sure that even so we have described it in its completeness. The downs about Stonehenge are covered with earthworks and barrows of all kinds; it is far from improbable that they also made a part of this great monument, though in what manner it is certainly impossible to say. Nor is it easy to get any clear idea of Stonehenge even by a visit to it; the imagination is paralysed by the vastness of the Plain and the enormous scale of everything about, which might seem to be measured rather by the stars than by man. It is largely this that makes of Stonehenge so inhuman a thing. All our temples and churches, our buildings of all sorts, are built to our measure; but Stonehenge might seem to have no relation to us, might seem as I say to be more acquainted with the distances of the stars, the inhuman spaces of the sky, than with any measurement natural to man. It is utterly impossible to say where it begins and where it ends. Indeed from one point of view the very ends of England might seem to be involved in it. All the hills point to it, curving as towards a centre. You have but to follow the South Downs or the North Downs, or the Chilterns or the Cotswolds, or the Mendips or the Dorset Downs, as they come in order from east to west, to find yourself at last at Stonehenge. It is as though the earth had conspired in its honour, as some have thought the sun has offered it a crown.

But if in some way we cannot unravel all England, its hills, and perhaps its very sky, is involved in this mystery, the monument itself—these circles and ellipses of stone—is easy to comprehend, ruined as it is.

The entrance of which I have spoken faces the north-east,

and it is in such an approach that even yet one gets the grandest view of the great outline of the ruin. Without the encircling earthwork, but within the long embanked entrance, is the vast block of stone known as the Friar's Heel, some seventeen feet high and now leaning far out of the perpendicular. Just within the earthwork is another large stone, now prostrate, known as the Slaughter Stone. Far to the right and left of this stone are



Stonehenge.

two smaller stones on the inner margin of the earthwork, which to the south of the eastern stone, to the north of the western, is here supported within by two barrows which it has been thought were already here when Stonehenge and its embankments were built.

From the Friar's Heel straight on past the Slaughter Stone to the first, that is the outer circle of upright stones, is about 70 yards. The outer circle consisted of 30 huge upright Sarsen stones embedded in the ground some three and a half feet apart and joined above by a continuous chain of 30 imposts, which

thus formed a ring or corona of stone some 16 feet above the ground. Each of these vast blocks is rough hewn, and the hanging stones are morticed on to the uprights, though how they were upreared is unknown to us.

Nine feet or thereabout within this huge outer stone circle, which was more than 30 yards in diameter, was an inner circle of upright Syenite monoliths almost six feet in height and numbering, as we may think, between 30 and 40.

Within this inner circle was the great ellipse which consisted of five enormous trilithons of hewn Sarsen stones, two uprights bearing one hanging stone like a gallows or doorway. Each was of a different height, it seems, rising from north-east to south-west, the loftiest being as much as 25 feet above the ground.

Within the great ellipse was the inner ellipse, which consisted of 19 upright Syenite monoliths like those of the inner circle.

Finally, within the inner ellipse stood the so-called Altar Stone, a vast block of micaceous sandstone.[1]

Of this magnificent monument only the ruin remains, a confusing heap of tumbled stones that local tradition asserts no man can number truly. Of the great outer circle but 16 uprights and six imposts are standing; of the inner circle but seven remain in position; of the great ellipse there are but two perfect trilithons and two uprights; of the inner ellipse six monoliths remain in position; within which the "Altar Stone" of course still lies.

But in spite of this ruin, which is by no means yet stayed, for two stones fell as lately as 1900 on the last night of the nineteenth century, I know of nothing else in the world half so impressive as Stonehenge in the midst of those lonely Downs. That this inexplicable monument has excited the curiosity of historians and archæologists these many hundred years goes without saying. It is curious, however, that we find no mention of it at all in any history or chronicle until the middle of the twelfth century, unless, indeed, we may believe that it is to Stonehenge Hecataeus of Abdera, a contemporary of Alexander the Great, alludes in his "History of the Hyperboreans," where he describes, vaguely enough, an island as large as Sicily in the north over against the country of the Celts, in which there was

[1] It was upon this stone, I need hardly remind the reader, that Tess slept for her last sleep of mortality, while the constables waited for her to awake to take her to Sarum Gaol for the murder of her seducer.

" a round temple dedicated to Apollo." However that may be, it is curious that no Roman historian mentions Stonehenge, that Gildas, Nennius and Bede are equally ignorant of it, and that it is not so much as spoken of in the Saxon Chronicle.

The first chronicler to speak of the Stones is Henry of Huntingdon (d. 1154), who tells us that " the second wonder (of England) is at Stanenges where stones of wonderful size have been erected after the manner of doorways, so that doorway appears to have been raised upon doorway nor can anyone conceive by what art such great stones have been so raised aloft, or why they were there constructed."

About the same time as Henry of Huntingdon was writing, Geoffrey of Monmouth gave his " Historia Britonum " to the world, a marvellous storehouse of legend and tradition. He, of course, does not omit to speak of Stonehenge, and this is his account of it:—

" Aurelius Ambrosius, wishing to commemorate those who had fallen in battle, and who were buried in the convent at Ambresbury, thought fit to send for Merlin the prophet, a man of the highest genius, both in predicting the future and in mechanical contrivances, to consult him on the proper monument to be erected to the memory of the slain. On being interrogated the prophet replied: ' If you are desirous to honour the burying place of these men with an everlasting monument send for the Giant's Dance, which is in Killaraus, a mountain in Ireland. For there is a structure of stones which none in this age could raise without a profound knowledge of the mechanical arts. They are stones of a vast magnitude and wonderful quality; and if they can be placed here as they are there, quite round this spot of ground, they will stand for ever.' At these words Aurelius burst out into laughter, and said, ' How is it possible to remove such large stones from so distant a country, as if Britain was not furnished with stones fit for the work?' Merlin having replied that they were mystical stones, and of a mechanical virtue, the Britons resolved to send for the stones, and to make war upon the people of Ireland if they should offer to detain them. Uther Pendragon, attended by 15,000 men, was made choice of as the leader, and the direction of the whole affair was to be managed by Merlin. On their landing in Ireland, the removal of the stones was violently opposed by one Gillomanius, a youth of wonderful valour who, at the head of a vast army,

exclaimed: 'To arms, soldiers, and defend your country; while I have life they shall not take from us the least stone of the Giant's Dance.' A battle followed, and victory falling to the Britons, they proceeded to the mountain of Killaraus and arrived at the structure of stones, the sight of which filled them with both joy and wonder. And while they were all standing round them, Merlin came up to them and said, 'Now try your forces, young men, and see whether strength or art can do more towards the taking down these stones.' At this word they all set to their engines with one accord and attempted the removal of the Giant's Dance. Merlin laughed at their vain efforts, and then began his own. At last, when he had done all that was necessary, he took down the stones with an incredible facility and withal gave directions for carrying them to the ships and placing them therein. This done, they with joy set sail again to return to Britain, where they arrived with a fair gale and repaired to the burial place with the stones. When Aurelius had notice of it, he sent out messengers to all the parts of Britain to summon the clergy and people together to the Mount of Ambrius in order to celebrate with joy and honour the erection of the monument. A great solemnity was held for three successive days; after which Aurelius bade Merlin to set up the stones over the sepulchre which he did, placing them in the same manner as they had stood in the Mount of Killaraus. . . ."

This story was repeated over and over again; Giraldus Cambrensis has it, so has Layamon and Robert of Gloucester, and indeed, until modern times we get no other explanation of the stones, even Leland repeating it in his "Commentarii de Scriptoribus Britannicis." When with the sixteenth century men begin to boggle at Merlin all is ascribed to the art of Ambrosius as in Polydore Vergil's English History, Speed's "History of Britain," and Stow's "Annales." Thomas Fuller, however, writing in the middle of the seventeenth century, has the following account of Stonehenge in the first book of his Church History. "It is contrived in form of a crown, consisting of three circles of stone set up gate-wise, some called 'corse-stones' of 12 tons, others called 'cronets' of seven tons weight (those haply for greater and those for inferior offices); and one stone at a distance seems to stand sentinel for the rest. It seems equally impossible that they were bred here or brought hither, seeing (no navigable water near) such voluminous bulks

are unmanageable in cart or waggon. As for the tale of Merlin's conjuring them by magic out of Ireland and bringing them aloft in the skies (what, in Charles's wain ?) it is too ridiculous to be confuted. This hath put learned men in necessity to conceive them artificial stones consolidated of sand. Stand they there in defiance of wind and weather (which hath discomposed the method of them) which if made of any precious matter (a bait to tempt avarice) no doubt long since had been indicted of superstition ; whereas now they are protected by their own weight and worthlessness."

The witty old man does not offer any theory of his own, and



Stonehenge, Details.

in this he shows himself both wiser and humbler than his successors. For the sceptical seventeenth century could not content itself with the stories of Geoffrey of Monmouth, and when in 1620 King James visited Stonehenge, he directed Inigo Jones " to produce out of his own practice in architecture and experience in antiquities abroad, what he could discover concerning this Stonehenge."

Inigo Jones is the first writer to attribute the stones to the Romans as Aubrey is the first to give them to the Druids. Perhaps after all Pepys does best, for he tells us he found the

stones "as prodigious as any tales I ever heard of them and worth this journey to see." And adds: "God knows what their use was!"

Long before this most just conclusion had been arrived at—and we ourselves have got no further—the poets,[1] wiser, as Aristotle tells us, than the historians, had said the same; as Sidney in his sonnets:

> "Near Wilton sweet, huge heaps of stones are found,
> But so confused that neither any eye
> Can count them just, nor reason reason try
> What force brought them to so unlikely ground."

Samuel Daniel is even more outspoken:

> "And whereto serves that wondrous trophy now
> That on the goodly plain near Wilton stands?
> That huge dumb heap that cannot tell us how
> Nor what, nor whence it is nor with whose hands
> Nor for whose glory it was set to show
> How much our pride mocks that of other lands,
>
> Wherein when as the gazing passenger
> Hath greedy look'd with admiration
> And fain would know its birth and what it were,
> How there erected and how long agone;
> Inquires and asks his fellow traveller,
> What he hath heard and his opinion?
>
> Then ignorance with fabulous discourse
> Robbing fair art and cunning of their right
> Tells how those stones were by the devil's force
> From Africk brought to Ireland in a night,
> And thence to Britannie by magick skill
> From giant's hands redeem'd by Merlin's sleight;
>
> And then near Ambry plac'd in memory
> Of all those noble Britons murder'd there,
> By Hengist and his Saxon treachery
> Coming to parle in peace at unaware.
> With this old legend then, credulity
> Holds her content and closes up her care."

With the poets for once I would reckon here Selden, who tells us that "several of the high stones of Stonehenge are honeycombed so deep that the starrs doe make their nests in the holes." He considers that the Druids built the monument,

[1] Spenser ("Faerie Queene," bk. ii, c. 10) is content with an allusion:

> "Whose dolefull moniments who list to rew
> Th' eternall marks of treason may at Stonehenge vew."

but notes that the stones or some of them " are of the very same kind of stones with the Grey Weathers about fourteen miles off."

It is with Stukeley I think that we begin the speculations of the modern world. Writing about 1740 he asserts that Stonehenge was a work of the Druids who founded it B.C. 460. Then in 1747 comes John Wood of Bath. He asserts that Stonehenge was " a temple erected by the British Druids about a hundred years before the commencement of the Christian era." In 1783 Dr. Johnson visited Stonehenge, and writes to Mrs. Thrale : " It is in my opinion to be referred to the earliest habitations of the island as a druidical monument of, at least, two thousand years, probably the most ancient work of man upon the island." Sir Richard Hoare a few years later is of a similar opinion. He attributes the erection of Stonehenge to the Celts from Celtic Gaul, our earliest inhabitants.

How much further than that have we got ? Very little. We seem to be able to assert definitely that Stonehenge is not earlier than the earliest Bronze Age, because we have discovered a stain of copper oxide upon the root of one of the stones, and though it is still believed, on similar grounds, that they were all hewn with the flint, because of that tell-tale stain they could not, it is thought, have been set up before bronze was known in this island, that is to say, not before 2000 B.C. On the other hand, as I say, it is still confidently asserted that these stones were hewn with flint axes ; and if that is so we have perhaps established a date after which they could not or were not likely to have been thus hewn, that is to say, we must not consider them later than 1800 B.C.

Another, and as I cannot but think it, a less satisfactory method of finding the age of Stonehenge, was first suggested in 1770 to Dr. Smith, the author of a work called " Choir Gaur : the Grand Orrery of the Druids." It is founded upon theory that the stones are the ruins of a temple for the worship of the sun, and that, therefore, it may be expected that they are built with reference to some particular point in the compass, probably with regard to the point at which the sun rises over the horizon at the summer solstice. Working upon these lines Sir Norman Lockyer[1] and Mr. Penrose obtained the date B.C. 1680 with a

[1] See " Stonehenge and other British Stone Monuments Astronomically Considered." 8vo. Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1909.

possible error either way of 200 years; but Mr. T. Rice Holmes[1] and others have considerably damaged Sir Norman's demonstration, the best support of which was the old custom of the people of Sarum of visiting Stonehenge to see the sun rise on the longest day of the year. Others again not less distinguished consider that Stonehenge was a temple of the cult of the dead. All such theories are interesting and exciting, but they seem to be incapable of any demonstration. We know nothing of Stonehenge. Its age is uncertain, but it would seem certainly to be less ancient than Avebury and Stanton Drew. Its purpose is inscrutable. It seems certain that it had some connection with the numerous barrows round it, some of which have been shown to contain interments; it seems more probable, then, that it was a temple than that it was a basilica or tribal meeting place; but it may have been neither, it may have served a purpose of which we know nothing, for it remains as impenetrable as the Sphinx.

It is not difficult to decide the way in which these stones may have been set up here. In the best account of Stonehenge that has yet been written[2] the author suggests that the stones were brought by innumerable men and horses from the Marlborough Downs where stones similar to the Sarsens are still to be seen in the Grey Wethers. "Trunks of oak . . . . pierced with holes for levers would furnish rollers to propel the stones to very near their destination. There it is necessary to suppose the site of Stonehenge occupied by a mound either artificial or natural; the ascent being by an easy incline from the quarter whence these stones were brought. On the top of the mound we must suppose as many holes dug as there were upright stones to be placed. On the arrival of each stone it would be dropped into its hole; and when all were thus placed, there would only remain the more easy task of laying on the imposts, each end of which evidently has been mortised on to the perpendiculars. The earth would then be dug away, leaving the structure complete, and if this earth must be accounted for we may think it probable that we see it in the numerous barrows near that still exist on Salisbury Plain."

[1] See T. Rice Holmes' *Ancient Britain and the Invasions of Julius Cæsar* (Clar. Press, 1907), 215–7, 472–6, 485–2.

[2] W. Long in *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xvi. p. 121. For the best account of the excavations see the article by the excavator, Mr. W. Gowland, F.S.A., in *W.A.M.* xxxiii. 1–62.

It may be so; but let us confess it, we know no more how these stones were set up, than why or whence they came, or who set them here, or for what purpose it was done. It is surely enough under the midsummer moon or on a winter afternoon to look upon this most ancient ruin set there for some great reason by our forefathers, to wonder at it and to be content. It keeps its secret, communing only with itself and the great wind of the Plain.

Of the Plain itself and its attendant downs who can speak well? Its character is best expressed by this great and inscrutable monument, for it is not a Roman but a prehistoric vastness we find there, crossed perhaps, it is true, by Roman roads, but certainly unharmed, and everywhere littered with tombs that as surely the Romans looked on not knowing what they were. All Salisbury Plain is a vast cemetery, Stonehenge is not its urn but its mausoleum. It is, as one might suppose, of all plains in southern England the loneliest, the most monotonous in its unchanging aspect, the most desolate and empty; yet its emptiness is filled by Stonehenge, its monotony is subject to the sky; but its loneliness is only emphasised by the shepherd and his flock, a sign almost celestial on the illimitable sky line. In colour it is for all its green so various, that one might compare it with the sea, for this, that it changes as the wind changes, as the light fails or waxes as the clouds cover the incredible blue of its sky, for indeed there is no sky in all England as here, depth beyond depth of purest blue. Is it the pale green which the white approach of the roads turns now to silver, now to chalk, that gives to the sky so far away this quality that is of all things rarest here in England?

But the Plain is a dead thing, engulfed in an audible silence.

CHAPTER VIII

THE UPPER VALLEY OF THE SALISBURY AVON

With the Plain, that unchanging and unchangeable thing, we are right, and indeed our travels compel us, as life and history have done, to contrast the valleys which everywhere traverse it out of sight. In them is human delight, their colour is the colour of life; they belong to us and are not yet a part of eternity. They change with the seasons and are amenable to our customs and our hearts. From the Plain they are as separate as the land from the sea, as the earth from the sky, and they receive from it but one thing: light. By the light of the Plain and its sky they are glorified; in it their streams are clearer than crystal and the deep shade of their great trees ash, beech and elm is ennobled and enriched, and every village, though half hidden, glows with I know not how warm a welcome. And there are sanctuaries, though not of an unknown god. Lowly in beauty they stand in learned and reasonable antiquity, scarce withdrawn from our homes and full, in spite of all that has befallen, of a sense of immemorial life. Their very roots are to be loved; perhaps they are Roman, certainly they are Saxon or Norman, and themselves are lovely still, with all the loveliness of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. They shelter no strangers but our own; here a crusader in armour all carved in stone, there an Elizabethan knight in gorgeous alabaster; here is the brass of a priest, the chalice in his hands, his epitaph in silver Latin; there a cruder memorial, but dearer far, of one who fell but yesterday. . . .

And the cottages, lost in their flowers; and the children who fill the green lanes with their voices? They are the life of the valleys and astonish us with beauty.

All the five valleys of the Plain are thus glorified with life and holy with history; it is hard to choose between them. Certainly this Avon vale, over which Stonehenge, sightless, peers at Figsbury, is not the least our own.

The Salisbury Avon comes down to Amesbury from the north a long winding stream, gentle as all these Wiltshire streams are, and singing only, as it were, under its breath, enlivening and making beautiful all the valley, a rosary of fair villages which take all their life and most of their loveliness from it. It comes out of the solitude of the Plain very slowly, advancing ever southward, but lingering on the way in many a delicious quietude, that in spite of the great military camps so close at hand, nothing has been able to spoil. Drayton, who knew and loved England as few before or after him, calls the Avon, and truly, the only child of Savernake:

> "The eastern Avon vaunts, and doth upon her take
> To be the only child of shadeful Severnake,
> As Ambray's ancient flood; herself and to enstyle
> The Stonendge's best-loved, first wonder of the isle;
> And what (in her behoof) might any want supply
> She vaunts the goodly seat of famous Salisbury;
> Where meeting pretty Bourne, with many a kind embrace
> Betwixt her crystal arms they clip that loved place."

The two great splendours in the valley of the Avon are of course Amesbury and Salisbury, and she may perhaps claim Stonehenge too, as Drayton does for her, though it be not truly in her arms; but beside these famous places there are others more numerous which, if they do not add to her fame, make up most of her beauty, and it is of these I now propose to write as well as I can.

Going northward from Amesbury, if you would keep to the valley, you have a choice of ways, one on either side the stream, and so you may go by the one and return by the other, and if you will, thus see all there is to be seen.

Starting from Amesbury it is easier to take the road by the western bank of Avon, that goes to Upavon through Durrington, Netheravon and Enford. It was by that road I set out.

Durrington is a place of great antiquity. Close by the present village at Durrington Walls there was a British village before the beginning of history, and near by may be seen to this day a huge Sarsen stone, called the Cuckoo Stone, which

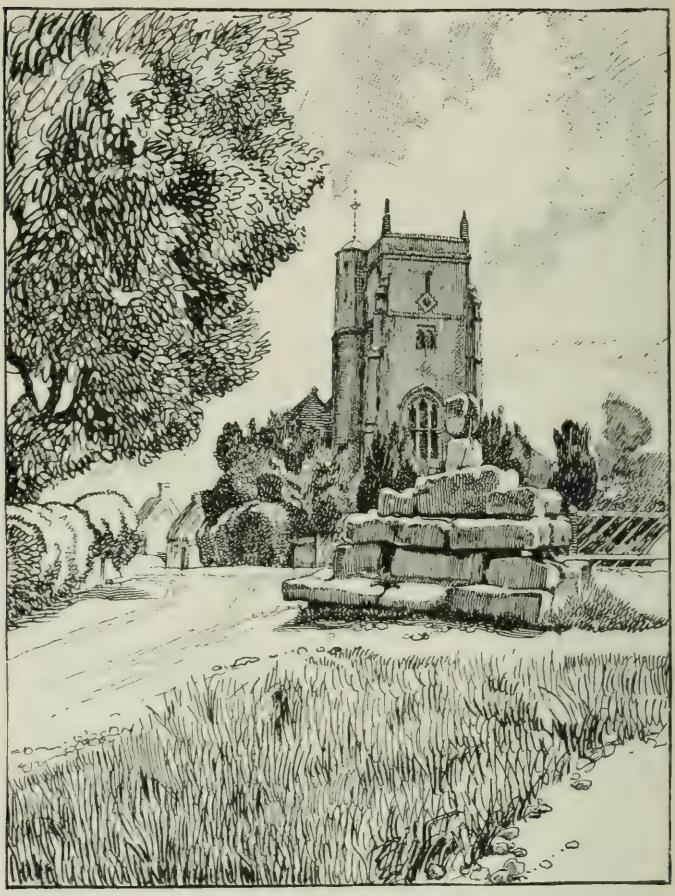
was perhaps on its way to Stonehenge when it fell here by the wayside. Old roads too abound, such as the "Wiltway" and the "Packway," old green roads of which we know nothing. Nor can it be said that there is anything to be told of Durrington till after the Conquest, when we learn from the Domesday Survey that it had belonged to a thane called Hardinge, and became part of the mighty spoil of Earl Alberic. The place thus consisted of two manors: the East-end manor was given to the Abbey of Bec perhaps under Lanfranc, perhaps under Anselm, a gift confirmed by Henry II., and the abbot used it till about 1200. The Abbot of Bec, in exchange for a prebend in Sarum cathedral, made over the (East-end) manor with other property to Herbert (Poore) Bishop of Sarum; and indeed the dean and chapter held it for some six hundred years.

The fate of the West-end manor was different. In the thirteenth century it was held by Hugo de Neville, who resigned all his rights in the chapel of Durrington in 1215 to the abbey of Amesbury. The Nevilles, however, held the manor till it passed by marriage to John, Lord de la Warre, who held it in 1388. At his death it came to his brother, a priest, who sold it to William of Wykeham, who gave it to his new college in Winchester. So things continued till the Reformation, when Durrington, after passing through the miseries of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, was enjoying a brief prosperity, altogether ruined by the suppression of the abbey of Amesbury.

I have said that the Nevilles gave the chapel of Durrington to Amesbury Abbey. This gift was not undisputed by the Crown, and that in the time of Edward I., but the prioress made good her claim, and the abbey held the church till the dissolution, when Henry VIII. gave the rectory to the dean and chapter of Winchester, with other rectories and churches in Wiltshire that had belonged to the abbey.

We have a description of the old church of All Saints as it existed before the rebuilding of 1851; it then consisted of "a nave and south aisle, west tower and chancel—the nave being a Norman structure, the aisle of debased character; the tower Perpendicular, and the chancel Early English. The font was defaced and of poor character; the pews high, but combining much good oak carving of the sixteenth century; the pulpit of the same date; a western gallery projecting

into the nave and filling the tower marred the effect of the tower arch; and the chancel was both ill-furnished and modernised



Durrington Church and Cross.

and without any archway or other mark of separation from the nave . . . . On the north wall a painting was brought

to light on removing some of the whitewash, but unfortunately the workmen had broken down a large portion of it before a drawing could be made . . . . The entire figure of St. Christopher was destroyed; the colours green, red and black were very perfect . . . . The church was re-dedicated to All Saints."[1]

I have quoted this account, authoritative and contemporary, because it gives an account of the sort of vandalism that was at that time going on all over Wiltshire, and indeed all over England. Too little, alas! of the old church remains. The Norman south arcade, however, still stands *in situ*, consisting of three bays of noble round arches of two orders springing from circular columns with moulded bases and capitals, save one which is carved with a scallop pattern. The old Norman doorway on the north has been rebuilt in the south aisle wall.

The Early English chancel has largely escaped the hands of the rebuilder. It still stands with its four lancet windows, its priest's doorway and double piscina, an early thirteenth century work. To the west of the priest's doorway is a low square headed window. The tower, too, has escaped; it remains a good work of about 1470. The eighteenth century pulpit is interesting, and has fortunately not been destroyed. By the churchyard gate are the ruins of a village cross.

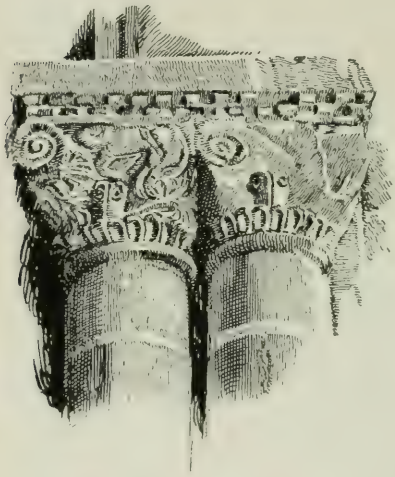
One climbs up out of Durrington on to the road again, and marching northward still up stream, in something over three miles one comes to Netheravon, like all these villages nestling beside the river.

Netheravon is not only in itself a place of considerable beauty, it has attractions both for the lover of literature and for the archaeologist that no other village in this valley can equal. To begin with, Sydney Smith was for two years, 1794–6, curate here, and that light-hearted parson seems to have had but a poor time of it. "Once a week," Lady Holland asserts, "a butcher's cart comes over from Salisbury; it was only then that he could obtain any meat, and he often dined on a mess of potatoes sprinkled with a little ketchup. Too poor to command books, his only resource was the squire, and his only relaxation long walks over these interminable plains, on one of which he narrowly escaped being buried in a snowdrift." The Anglican wit seems to have been anything but happy in his cure, and must often have thought of that butcher's cart

[1] *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xxxiii. 277 *et seq.*

when breakfasting with Rogers in his more prosperous years. His purgatory with nature was, however, short lived. The well-disposed squire of the parish was Michael Hicks-Beach, who seems to have been an exceedingly good fellow. He was very kind to Smith; in 1797 he made him travelling tutor to his eldest son, the grandfather of the first Lord St. Aldwyn, and in 1798 Smith found himself at Edinburgh, where his social gifts and poor jokes had no doubt greater scope.

It must have been Smith's pupil that gave William Cobbett his famous day's coursing when he saw an acre of hares here at Netheravon. "Not far from Amesbury is a little village called Netheravon, where I once saw an acre of hares," he writes in "Rural Rides." "We were coursing at Everley, a few miles off; and one of the party happening to say that he had seen 'an acre of hares' at Mr. Hicks-Beach's at Netheravon, we who wanted to see the same or to detect our informant, sent a messenger to beg a day's coursing, which being granted, we went over the next day. Mr. Beach received us very politely. He took us into a wheat stubble close by his paddock; his son took a gallop round, cracking his whip at the same time; the hares (which were very thickly in sight before) started all over the field—ran into a flock like sheep; and we all agreed that the flock did cover *an acre of ground*."



Norman Capitals, Netheravon Church.

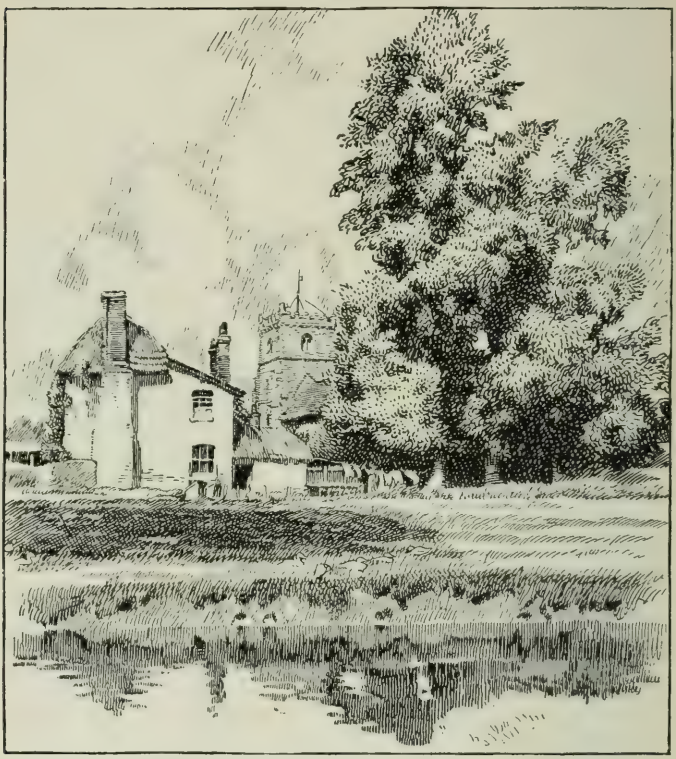
But the best thing to be had in Netheravon is not such memories as these, but a sight of the church, which is one of the most precious village churches in the county. It consists of clerestoried nave with north and south aisles, chancel and

western tower; while a porch built in the sixteenth century at the east end of the south aisle gives the lord of the manor access to the chancel. The main interest of the church lies, however, in the tower, a beautiful work largely untouched, which seems to be a Saxon work, though perhaps it is safer to call it an early Norman building. At any rate, it is extremely interesting. To east and west it has two lofty round arched openings now barred by modern doors. These are upheld by round pillars with sculptured capitals, and two smaller round arched openings stand also north and south. To explain these now is perhaps impossible; we can only suggest that of old the tower was a central one and stood in the midst of nave, chancel, and transepts, or that, if it was always western, it was surrounded by chapels, one of which may have been a baptistery. The upper storey of the tower possesses thirteenth century windows, and the parapet and pinnacles date from 1626. Within we have a thirteenth century nave, the eastern bays of which are somewhat later than the western; a beautiful thirteenth century clerestory and thirteenth century chancel with a good lancet window and priest's door on the north. The two-light early Decorated window on the south has been incorporated with the arch between the chancel and the manorial porch. The aisles are later work, of the middle of the fifteenth century, but the roofs here, like that of the chancel, are modern, that of the nave alone being ancient.

Little more than two miles above Netheravon, beside the winding Avon, lies the village of Enford, of old, Avonford, and in its way a remarkable place. The church is still in a sense Norman, for the pillars and arches of that foundation still remain, but in 1817 the church was struck by lightning and practically destroyed, and what escaped that catastrophe was rebuilt a few years later and again "restored" in 1892. It must once have been among the more notable buildings of the county. Alas, that such things should ever be destroyed!

I pushed on to Upavon where the Downs open and give you, if you will, all the vale of Pewsey and the great Downs between Marlborough and Devizes on the further side. Upavon is an interesting place. Small as it now is, it still has an air of importance, and was a market town in the time of Edward II., who gave it to his favourite, Despenser. Here, too, was a cell of the alien abbey of Fontanelle in Normandy, a Benedictine

house, which, on the suppression of such places, was granted by Henry VI. to the Augustinians of Ivychurch in the lower valley of the Avon. All this is gone, but Upavon still possesses a church almost as fine as that of Netheravon, and though much



Upavon.

reduced and damaged, worth some trouble to see. Dedicated in honour of Our Lady, it boasts what is still substantially a Transitional chancel (*circa* 1175), the buttresses of which remain with two side windows at the east end, about one of the fifteenth century, a priest's door and a window in the north wall. The

chancel arch is most curious. It is triple, the central arch being wider than the others and pointed with Norman moulding on the outer member. The side arches westward are round, but on the east not only narrower but pointed. The piers are square.

Mr. Ponting, in his account of the church,[1] tells us that in his opinion "it is probable there was no nave of stone" before the thirteenth century, but perhaps one of timber. In the earlier years of the thirteenth century, however, a large nave with aisles was built. It was begun at the western end, the three western bays of the north arcade and the whole of the south arcade, which, however, do not correspond, having been built (1200–20) perhaps 30 years before the easternmost arch on the north side. But at some time unknown the south aisle was destroyed, and the arches blocked up; and so with the north aisle, that we see being entirely new. The tower seems to have been the last thing built, late in the thirteenth century—a very noble work, even as we have it, with a fifteenth century parapet. Over the west doorway is a crucifix also of the fifteenth century. The porch was of the thirteenth century, but has been rebuilt. The font remains a beautiful thirteenth century work carved on its eight sides with various devices, among them on the north side is a representation of the Annunciation, very lovely.

Near Upavon is Rushall, where the small church dedicated in honour of St. Matthew, though restored, contains a little old work of good quality. The octagonal bowl of the font stands on a capital of the end of the twelfth century, so there was surely a church here in Norman times, and the bowl itself cannot be much later. The nave is of the middle of the fourteenth century, as is the chancel arch, and the western tower dates from the latter part of the fifteenth century. The bench ends are of the sixteenth century, and very good, and there is some old glass, mere fragments, in a window in the north wall of the nave.

Close to Rushall is the village of Charlton, whose church of St. Peter was of old a chapel of Upavon. Here the nave and chancel have been rebuilt in the middle of the nineteenth century. Fragments only remain, therefore, of the old building, but these are often lovely, as, for instance, the piscina in the chancel and the carved string course under the east window, both dating from the early fifteenth century. Of the old buildings, however, the chapel on the north side of the nave and the adjoining tower

[1] *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xxv. 267.

remain. They, too, date from the first half of the fifteenth century. The former contains a brass commemorating William Chancey and his wife, the builders of the chapel, dated 1524. The screen here between the chapel and nave is fine, and the arch itself is panelled. The chancel screen, which is the only division between nave and chancel, is of the same period but much restored; the old colouring in part remains. Tower and chapel were, as I have suggested, built together, and this accounts, perhaps, for the strange position of the former.

The old Jacobean mansion, Charlton Park, has been entirely modernised; the west front, however, attributed to Inigo Jones, remains. John Dryden was here in the year of the Great Fire, and wrote the "Annus Mirabilis" in this house, dating his letter "an account of the ensuing poem in a letter to the Honourable Sir Robert Howard," "From Charlton in Wiltshire, Nov. 10, 1666."

Returning to Upavon I crossed the river to set out on my way down stream by the eastern bank to Sarum. It is true that the Avon does not rise at Upavon, but it is equally true that the Avon valley really begins there, for the upper streams of the river—there are two of them—flow through the Vale of Pewsey, and their villages belong to that wide and beautiful valley. So I turned on my way back from that deep lowland to this smaller valley where bell now answered bell intimately from church to church like voices of sisters calling one to another in the same house: "*Ave Maria, Gratia plena. Ora pro nobis.*"

On I went, and the bare Downs stretched away on my left, but the valley murmured with summer on my right: now from the illimitable sky I caught the throbbing and then the sight of an aeroplane beating up into the sun; there I would see a camp of white tents; and there the Down would bear ungraciously the horrible iron houses which belong to the War Office. So I went under Chisenbury Camp, which according to Hoare "is one of the most original and unaltered works of the British era which our country can produce." I marked it not, nor the Priory neither, where lived that Henry Grove, who was executed at Exeter in 1655 for an attempted rising in favour of Charles II. *Requiescat in Pace.* I went on, and all the way beneath or beside me went the valley with its clear and gentle stream—all the way to Fittleton.

Fittleton is a gracious place and possesses a charming little



Frontispiece.

church of the thirteenth or fourteenth century with a western tower of the fifteenth century. There is, too, a Norman font, and in the chancel arch two stopped squints, that, of course,

we have no use for. In the chancel is a fine altar tomb of those Hicks-Beach whose descendants befriended Sydney Smith, and showed Cobbett such sport at Netheravon across the stream. There, too, is a seventeenth century brass, punning to all Eternity upon one Roger Kay.

Two miles, it may be less, below Fittleton, past Gallows Barrow, lies Figheldean among the orchards with a fine old church, one of the best in this valley. It consists of nave with two aisles and clerestory and chancel. The nave is Early English, the arches borne by circular pillars which may be Norman. The clerestory and aisles are of the fourteenth century, as is the chancel. Curious and lovely heads support the roof. In the porch are some effigies, one of great beauty, and there, too, is a holy water basin full of rubbish. In the chancel are some monuments to the Poores, members no doubt of that family which produced the greatest Bishops of the See.

At Milston, a pretty place, perhaps two miles further down the valley, half encircled by the stream which there runs westward and returns, Joseph Addison was born. His father was rector of the little church here and lived in the old parsonage that, alas! has been destroyed. It is impossible to believe that it was not a memory of these high Downs, then so lovely, with their infinite expanse of heaven, that inspired Addison in later years to write that famous hymn :—

"The spacious firmament on high
With all the blue ethereal sky
And spangled heavens a shining frame
Their great Original proclaim.

The unwearied Sun from day to day
Does her Creator's power display
And publishes to every land
The works of an almighty hand.

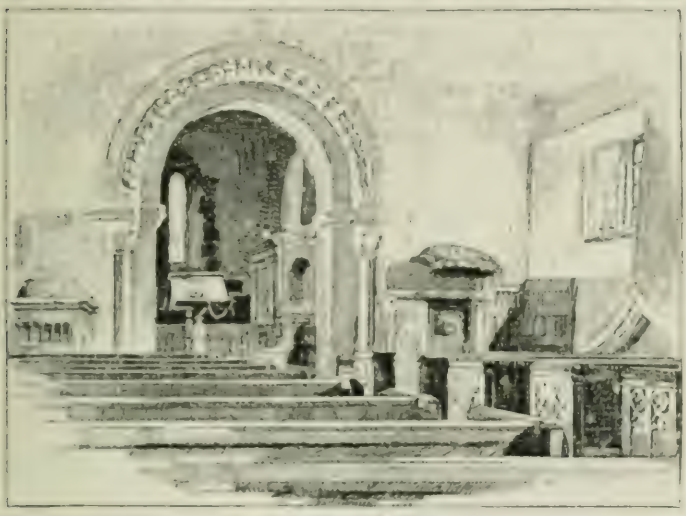
Soon as the evening shades prevail
The moon takes up the wondrous tale
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth.

Whilst all the stars that round her burn
And all the planets in their turn
Confirm the tidings as they roll
And spread the truth from pole to pole."

Is it only because I have always known that hymn that it seems to me to be poetry—the only poetry Addison ever wrote?

Milston is not three miles from Amesbury, and the wise traveller will cross the river there to Durrington and avoid Bulford. It is seven miles from Amesbury to Sarum, but the longer way, maybe a mile longer, is the better, for it takes you by the lanes through Durnford and avoids the dusty and motor-ridden high road.

Durnford lies under Ogbury Camp, a third of the way to Sarum, on the east bank of the Avon. It belonged at one time



Great Durnford Church.

to the Hungerfords, and thither in 1654 came John Evelyn the Diarist. On his way from Sarum to Stonehenge "indeed a stupendious monument, appearing at a distance like a castle," he "dined at a ferme of my Uncle Hungerford's called Darneford Magna, situate in a valley under ye plaine most sweetly watered abounding in trouts catched by speare in the night, when they came attracted by a light set in ye sterne of a boate."

But the great delight in Durnford is the church. A small building of nave with north and south porches, western tower and chancel, it is, in many ways, at least as interesting as any other village church in this valley. To begin with, as we see it,

it was first a Norman structure to which the north and south doorways, the latter under an oak framed porch of the fifteenth century, still bear witness with their round arches, as within does the chancel arch, the capitals of its pillars carved with birds. These would appear to be works of the early twelfth century, and if, as Mr. Ponting thinks, they are not the earliest things to be seen in the church, they are the earliest to strike an untrained observer.[1] The work in the chancel in so far as it is not a rebuilding of our own day is work of the late twelfth century. This may be seen in the windows, those slightly pointed lancets north and south, the former now blocked and spoiled. The east window is of the same time, a triple lancet under a pointed arch, and the small low splayed window on the north wall at the west end would seem to be of the same period. The two aumbries in the chancel should be noted.

The nave as we see it is lighted by windows of the fifteenth century. In one of them there is some rare old glass in which we may see a finely preserved representation of the Crucifixion and the figure of a bishop. The font is an extremely fine example of early twelfth century work, the base sculptured with interlaced arches and fluted pilasters, and, about the rim, with a sort of spiral. The roofs of both nave and chancel are of the late twelfth or early thirteenth century.

It is, however, in the tower that we have the rarest feature of the church, for it is of the thirteenth century, a noble thing. There are five bells in the tower, one of them of pre-Reformation date. It bears the inscription: "AV GRACIA PLENA," and was therefore the Ave bell or Angelus.

In the south wall of the nave are two recessed tombs, the earlier of the fourteenth century, the other containing a thirteenth century slab with incised cross from some other part of the church. Here, too, by the door are remains of frescoes. In the chancel is a thirteenth century monument to Edward Yonge, his wife and fourteen children. The lectern is also of this time and bears a chained copy of Bishop Jewel of Salisbury's "Apology for the Church of England" (1571).

From Durnford it is a delightful walk of some five miles beside Avon into Salisbury.

[1] Mr. Ponting—and no better judge exists—tells us that the work described above "so far from representing the first church erected here is only the remodelling of a still older structure, the walls of which remain on the inside."

CHAPTER IX

THE WYLYE VALLEY

Of all the valleys of South Wiltshire I love best the Wylye valley, not only because it seems to me the most beautiful, but because it sums up in itself all that I love in the rest, and while remaining utterly itself is, as it were, an epitome of all the valleys of the Plain. It is fruitful and very quiet, but not dumb; in it the heart of South England still laughs and sings serene and steadfast under the great Downs that compass it with their strength on every side. There is no such valley in any other land than England.

The true Vale of Wylye, though the stream, married there with the Nadder, goes down to Sarum, begins, or rather ends, at Wilton on the verge of Salisbury meads. I have spoken of Wilton elsewhere, but it is the greatest place upon the Wylye, and gets its very name from the stream which, as it were, by right of beauty, names all Wiltshire. As Spenser sings:—

> "Next him went Wylye-borne with passage sly
> That of his wyliness his name doth take
> And of himself doth name the shire thereby."

Wilton stands in a strong place in the very angle formed by the junction of the Wylye with the Nadder, and behind it, running westward, rises the great watershed which stands up between these two vales.

From Wilton then the Wylye valley opens, almost due north at first, as far indeed as Great Wishford, where it turns westward and proceeds for near fifteen miles boasting many a beautiful village. Cobbett counted one and thirty between Sarum and Warminster, and as noble a series of parish churches as are to be found anywhere within the county.

The first of these churches above Wilton in Cobbett's day was that of South Newton on the left bank of the stream; but this is scarcely worth a visit now, for it was completely restored and even in part rebuilt in 1862 by Lady Herbert of Lea. It was of old a Norman foundation and still retains some of its Norman arches and windows, but all is made new, and the old charm has departed.

Much the same fate has befallen the church of St. Michael at Great Wishford, the more beautiful sister of South Newton on the right bank of the Wylye, set on a delicious hill there, not more than a mile up stream. The church was rebuilt in 1861, but originally, as the font proves, a Norman church had stood here, and that this was rebuilt in the thirteenth century the chancel walls and the lovely triple lancet of the east window bear witness. Beyond this, however, the church to-day consists of a nave which has encroached altogether upon the chancel now but twelve feet six inches in length, north and south aisles of three bays, south porch and western tower; all being new but the lower stage of the tower, which is of the fifteenth century.

Of this date, too, is the recessed altar tomb in the south aisle, with its recumbent effigy of a man in a long robe caught about by a girdle hung with sword and purse; at his feet is a lion. Beneath the head of this figure is a cushion upon which is a small figure of a woman. The inscription is as follows: "HIC JACET THOMS BONHAM ARMIGER QUODM PATRONUS ISTIS ECCLIE QUI QUIDEM THOMAS OBIT XXIX DIE MAII A° DNI MCCCCLXXIII. ET EDITHA UXOR EJS QUE QUIDEM EDITHA OBIJT XXVI DIE APRILIS A° DNI MCCCCLXIX QUORUM ANIMABUS PROPRITIETUR DEUS AMEN."

The local tradition will have it that Sir Thomas Bonham is here represented in pilgrim's garb as he returned from a seven years' pilgrimage in the Holy Land. He is said to have been the father of seven children, all born at one birth after his return, and it is further said that these seven babes were all brought to their christening in a sieve which for long hung in the church.

Close by in a modern recess is another figure, that of a woman, perhaps the Edith spoken of in the inscription above. In the same aisle is a great coffered chest supposed to be of Spanish chestnut and to have been taken "from the Spanish wreck by Sir Richard Grobham."

The most beautiful thing in the church is the magnificent

seventeenth century monument to this Sir Richard Grobham and his wife, which stands in the chancel. He died in 1629, and his tomb is one of the finest Renaissance works in the county. The whole is of marble, and upon it are the fine recumbent figures of Sir Richard and his wife. On the wall opposite hang the knight's banner and helm.

On the Downs to the south-west of Great Wishford is Groveley Wood, through which the Roman road from Old Sarum to the Mendips ran. I shall speak of Groveley hereafter. The whole down here is rich in prehistoric remains, earthworks, ditches, and barrows. Several Neolithic flint celts and scrapers have been unearthed and are now in the Blackmore Museum in Sarum. Roman coins, too, have been found, and what is thought to be an extensive Romano-British settlement covering 60 acres at Groveley Works. The height affords a most noble view of Salisbury, Old Sarum, and the wide meads and vale.

Two miles or a little less above Great Wishford, and all the way is serene and beautiful, is the village of Little Langford. Here there is a most interesting church. It is true that it was rebuilt in 1864, but more than enough remains to it for our delight, in the great and very early Norman doorway in the south wall of the nave. This doorway, with its elaborate semi-circular arch and carved capitals, is noble in itself, and its shouldered opening with flat lintel on which a boar hunt is sculptured in relief is curious; but it is the tympanum that excites our greatest interest, for there we see, as it were enthroned, a bishop in dalmatic, alb, and stole, with right hand raised in benediction, while in his left he holds a pastoral staff whence a branch has sprouted; on the right are three birds perched on a tree. What can this represent? The church is dedicated in honour of St. Nicholas. Is it of him this sculpture speaks? It would seem that it is not. Mr. Powell[1] argues that we have here a scene in the life of quite another personage, and one much more interesting to us than St. Nicholas of Bari. He suggests that it is St. Aldhelm himself we see over this door in a carving produced in the days when St. Osmund was bishop of Sarum (1078–1099)—St. Osmund who translated St. Aldhelm's remains to Malmesbury and assisted Lanfranc to obtain his canonisation. It seems that when St. Aldhelm was one day preaching at Bishopstrow he fixed his ashen staff in the ground,

[1] In *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xxxvi. 207, and xxxiii. 116.

and, a miracle, as he spoke it put forth buds and leaves. He left it in that place as an offering to God, and many ash trees sprang from it, and so the place was called "*ad episcopi arbores*." Bishop's trees, that is.

Leaving Little Langford, we pass on up the beautiful vale. It is impossible to describe the quietness of this valley or its serene English beauty of meadow and grove and slowly moving stream, all set with dear steadings and old farms and ennobled with trees, among which the elm is chief. It is perhaps between Little Langford and Wylye that the scene is most characteristic, and Wylye seems itself to complete it altogether. Here is the great ford of the stream, and therefore Wylye is the chief village of the middle valley; moreover, it is just half way between Sarum and Warminster, and opposite to it on the northern bank of the stream stood the famous Deptford Inn.

The church, it is delightful to know, is dedicated in honour of the Blessed Virgin; truly in such a bower as this should she receive our love. But alas! save for the east and in part the north walls of the chancel and the western tower, this church was rebuilt in 1844, and as might be expected, a dreadful mess has been made of it. Happily, the most lovely eastern window escaped. It was built in 1230, and is a triple lancet of incomparable and simple beauty, with moulding carved with dog-tooth ornament and fine corbel heads all of that splendid period. We pass from it to the archway between the nave and the tower which is of the fourteenth century, and so to the tower itself, a work of the fifteenth century unworthy of that perfect east window. Three other things remain here of pre-Reformation date; over the porch doorway is a fine sculptured panel representing the Crucifixion, and the tower contains the old Angelus bell, inscribed still: "AVE MARIA." Most precious of all is the silver chalice which bears the hall mark of 1525 and is the oldest in the county.[1] The seventeenth century pulpit and prayer desk and two of the fine brass candelabra come from the old church of Wilton.

More than a mile above Wylye stands the interesting and pretty village of Stockton, with its most curious church, noble manor house, almshouses and fine old farm. The manor dates from very ancient times. It is said that in Alfred's time it was held by a certain Wulfhere. In Domesday Book it appears,

[1] That at Highworth is dated 1534.

however, as the property of the Bishop of Winchester, but after the Reformation it came, we know not how, into the possession



Stockton Manor House.

of the Topp family, who, according to Sir Richard Hoare, had been tenants of the manor under the monks of St. Swithin of Winchester. At the end of the sixteenth century it was the

property of that John Topp who built the beautiful manor house, founded the almshouse, and died in 1635, and is buried in the church.

The manor house is a very noble building of this time full of wonderful panelling and plaster ceilings and great mantelpieces. Not long since when it was in the possession of General Yeatman Biggs it was nobly furnished too from top to bottom with Elizabethan and Jacobean furniture, but that has all been sold. Yet the house remains enough in itself and well worth a visit. Nor should anyone pass by without attention the Topp almshouses founded in 1641, which still house eight old people, nor the great farmhouse of Jerome Poticary, nor the old barn. But in spite of all these fine things the church remains by far the most interesting thing in the place, and one of the most interesting buildings in Wiltshire.

Dedicated in honour of St. John Baptist, this church consists of clerestoried nave, chancel, north porch and western tower. The two western bays of the nave are Transitional Norman; eastward of these is a lower and narrow bay, the arches of which do not match, that in the south being of the fourteenth century when the south aisle was built probably as a chantry, according to Mr. Ponting, that on the north being a later work; but the north aisle is older than the south, being in its west part still Early English, the remainder with the porch is a rebuilding of 1842. The western tower is notable, being for three stages Early English work finished with a fourteenth century parapet with gargoyles. As for the chancel, the south wall with its windows is Early English, the rest a rebuilding. The fact that it is so short is explained by Mr. Ponting as the result of the building of the south aisle in the fourteenth century when it was encroached upon. In that aisle to-day is to be seen the recumbent effigy of a woman of the same date.

The clerestory of the nave was added in the fifteenth century, and the roof of that time in part remains. The north aisle with its fine roof of carved cedar contains the beautiful canopied tomb of John Toppe and his wife and family with effigies (*circa* 1632). A tomb of about the same time is to be seen in the south aisle, which has a roof of Jacobean date; it is the monument of Jerome Poticary, who built the great farmhouse of which I have spoken. The font is Transitional Norman, and the pulpit of the time of Charles I.

The church has been restored at various times, notably in 1854, when it was found necessary "to pull down and rebuild the chancel arch, which was effected by shoring up the whole of the east end of the nave by means of props from below. Though the chancel arch was so small and narrow as to be inconvenient for service, and showed such signs of settlement as to necessitate its removal, it was not without considerable regret that it was taken down; as it was unmistakably of a peculiar horse-shoe form, contracted at the base and bulging out in the centre, and that regret was not diminished when in removing the adjoining walls on either side there were found, though concealed by the plaster, on the north side a rude hagioscope or squint, and on the south side what appeared to be the remains of an ambry, though some supposed this too to be a hagioscope."

It is this eastern wall of the nave dividing nave and chancel that is the most interesting feature of the church. If the hagioscopes and doorway opening in it are evidence of its date, it was built in the fifteenth century. But it is possible that this wall, or one like it, always divided completely nave or chancel, and that we have here a rare survival of a thing common in our churches until the thirteenth century as still in the East.[1] If this were so it was probably frescoed and bore a rood, or was painted with a representation of the Last Judgment.

About a mile up the valley from Stockton stands the village of Sherrington, a pretty place enough remarkable for two things—the church of SS. Cosmas and Damian, and the curious moated mound to the west of it where of old stood a castle of the Giffards of Boyton. The church is a complete surprise not only in its dedication. It is, as we see it, a rebuilding of 1624, when many of the features of the older church were used in the new, such as the west window and the east window, the windows in the north and south walls of the chancel, the priest's door there, parts of the main porch too, the chancel arch and the font, all of which date from the early part of the fifteenth century, the font, according to Mr. Ponting, being somewhat earlier. Apart from these things the whole church is a building of the early seventeenth century, a most interesting example of the work done in the time of James I.

Just beyond Sherrington stands the village of Boyton, a pretty

[1] See *W. A.M.* xx. 167

place and a quiet, where of old the Giffards were lords. They were retainers of the Earl of Salisbury when first we hear of



Boyton Manor House.

them, and it was from Edward Earl of Salisbury that they obtained Boyton not many years after the Conquest. By 1149 they were in secure possession of the place, and about that year

Elias Giffard granted "for the soul's health of Bertha his wife and of his ancestors in general the church of Our Lady at Boyton with other things to St. Peter of Gloucester." In Henry III.'s time the family became very famous. Hugh Giffard of Boyton was then Constable of the Tower of London and in the household of the King; his son Walter was Bishop of Bath (1264), and eventually became Archbishop of York (1279); another, Godfrey, was Bishop of Worcester for thirty-three years, and Alexander went on the Crusade. It was Godfrey who seems to have built the chantry of Boyton church; it is Alexander who lies in it in a very noble if spoiled tomb.

That church is altogether beautiful, and such as can only be found in England. It is dedicated, as I have said, in honour of Our Lady, and consists of chancel with side projections, nave with transept or recess on the north, and a chapel or chantry on the south, the tower-porch on the north-west of the transept, and vestry.

As we see it, the oldest part is the chancel which dates from the middle of the thirteenth century, in so far as it is old, that is to say, all the south wall with its beautiful canopied sedilia, piscina, lancet windows and priest's door, the east wall, but not the window there, and the three lancets on the north. The east window is modern, replacing the Perpendicular window now at the west end of the nave which replaced a triple lancet, we may suppose. In one of the lancets that remain in the chancel we may still see the coat of Thomas Plantagenet Earl of Lancaster, son of Henry III., who, having married a Longespée, became by right of his wife Earl of Sarum. To the thirteenth century must also be given the glorious doorway now in the tower, but originally in the south wall of the nave. In the middle of the fourteenth century the lower stage of the tower and the transept on the north were built, together with the vestry, the chancel arch and the arch into the transept. The windows of the transept are very lovely Decorated work, as is the single light of the vestry. The upper part of the tower was built at the end of the fourteenth century. But the loveliest and most notable thing in the church is the delicious chapel to the south of the nave, a complete work of the late thirteenth century when Early English was passing into Decorated. It was founded, as has been thought, by Godfrey Giffard, Bishop of Worcester, who died in 1301, lord of the manor of Boyton, as

a chantry chapel for his heroic brother, Alexander the Crusader, who had gone to the Holy Land in the time of Longespée in 1250.

Longespée fell at Mansoura, his English retainers about him. There was Sir Robert de Vere, who slew seventeen Saracens "before his soul went rejoicing to God." There was Sir Alexander Giffard, "Sir," says he to his lord, "for the love of God what is your counsel regarding this host of Saracens which now comes against us? Shall we remain here, or fly for fear of them?" But the Earl answered steadfastly: "Here ought each of us to show his prowess; let us ride on to encounter these dogs; for the love of Jesus Christ we will die here, for the love of Jesus Christ came we here to win by prowess our inheritance, the bliss of heaven." Longespée fell; Giffard, his knight, escaped to do his bidding and to distribute his goods according to his command. He returned to die at Boyton where he had often flown his hawks, still a young man. You see him there in the chapel his brother built to hold his tomb. This stands under the easternmost arch, evidently built to receive it, and upon it lies the effigy of a cross-legged knight, his arms blazoned in his shield, a long straight sword by his side, his feet resting upon an otter. He is in chain mail, a noble figure that has been badly scraped and defaced by the restorers, but is still an admirable thing to come upon in a wayside church.

"It shows a warrior arm'd
Across his iron breast
His hands by death are charm'd
To leave his sword at rest.

Wherewith he led his men
O'ersea, and smote to hell
The astonisht Saracen
Nor doubted he did well.

Would we could teach our sons
His trust in face of doom
Or give our bravest ones
A comparable tomb.

. . . . .

Yet dearer far to me
And brave as he are they
Who fight by land and sea
For England at this day."

I have said nothing of the architecture of this chantry chapel. It is exceedingly lovely with its noble windows, that in the east of three lights, that in the west a large wheel window, of fine triangular tracery. In the south wall are canopied sedilia and piscina. In the midst of the chapel is a rich altar tomb that was once loaded with sculptured figures. Here it is said lay Lady Margaret Giffard, the last of the family. In the floor is a great matrix of purbeck that has lost its noble brass.

Beyond Boyton the valley widens curiously and the hills



The Old Manor House, Sutton Veny

standing away grow nobler in form, but it is not till we reach Sutton Veny that anything at all notable in the way of a building is to be found. Even at Sutton Veny the church is new, but fortunately, though the greater part of the old church has been allowed to fall to ruin, the chancel remains and is now used as a mortuary chapel.

Sutton Veny is a picturesque, old fashioned, rambling place, stretched along the road, and should, one might think, possess many noteworthy things. All I could find, however, were the fragments of the old church and some Decorated work

built into the old parsonage. The old church was originally a Norman building—the north doorway which remains proves it; but it was rebuilt in the thirteenth century, and for the most part the chancel, like the ruins, is of that time.

Close down by the river in this parish, towards Norton Bavant, the foundations of "two Roman villas" were found in 1786. These consisted of four pavements, which were all destroyed as soon as found, save one, which was said to have been taken to Longleat, and has now disappeared. It must, therefore, always remain uncertain whether there were two villas here or one large one. These remains are one of the best pieces of evidence for the existence of a Roman road from Sorbiodunum to the Mendips, for it would have served them.

On the heights to the north-west of the village, between it and Bishopstrow, are many barrows and earthworks. Especially notable is the earthwork known as Robin Hood's Bower, I know not why, inside Southleigh Wood.

Bishopstrow, which stands at the head of the Wylye Valley, for Warminster beyond it, though usually taken as the key to the vale of Wylye, is in fact in quite another vale, is a delicious place, curiously surrounded by terraced hills, upon which are set the mighty camps of Battlesbury and Scratchbury, to the north-east commanding the narrow entrance into the valley from Warminster. The church, dedicated in honour of St. Aldhelm, who, as we have seen, was preaching here when his ashen staff or crozier miraculously budded, is now, alas! a building of 1757, but its foundations certainly date from Saxon times, and Hoare published a ground plan of that early church, showing its semicircular apse without lights. Nothing at all of this remains, however, above ground, the only medieval part of the present building being the early fifteenth century tower, a charming work spoiled by the raising of the ground.

At Bishopstrow I crossed the stream, to follow it on the left bank, by the great high road from Bath and Warminster, down to Salisbury; and the first place I came into was Norton Bavant. This delicious village lies off the highway, beside the stream. The church was altogether rebuilt in 1840, except the fourteenth century tower, and the archway of the same date leading from the nave into the south chapel, where a brass remains to John Benet and Agnes his wife (1461). The archway from the nave into the tower is of chalk, and

in the tower are four bells, brought here from Bishopstrow, one of them of medieval date, bearing the inscription, "✠ SANCTE : TOM : ORA : PRO : NOBIS."

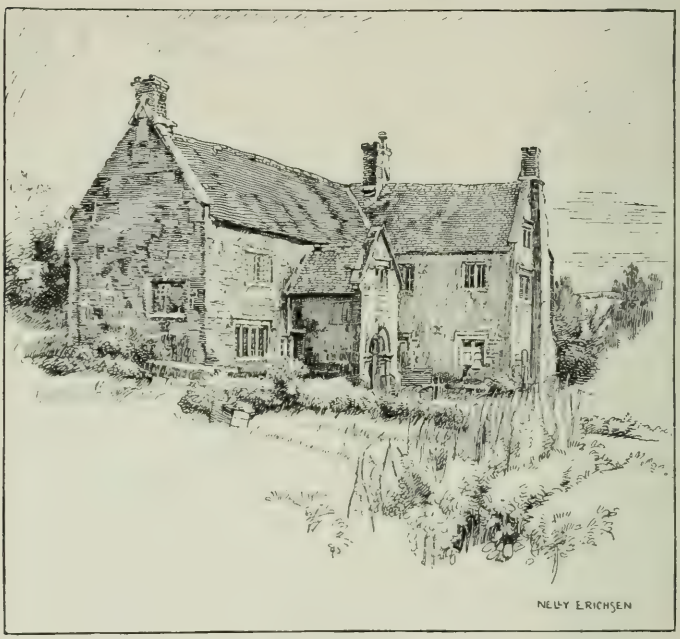
From Norton Bavant, along the highway, it is something under a mile into Heytesbury. This old town stretched all along the road is a pleasant and quiet place of very great antiquity. The Saxons called it Hegtredesbyri, and the Normans, according to Domesday Book, Hestrebe. For long it played a not inconsiderable part in the history of the county, and sent a member to Parliament; but in 1832 it was disfranchised.

In the time of Henry II. Heytesbury was divided into four parts, which belonged to the four families of Dunstanville, Montfort, Badlesmere and Burghersh, but in the time of Richard II. the four were united in the hands of the elder Hungerfords, who took their title from the place in the time of Henry VIII. It was as lords of Heytesbury they bought Farleigh Castle in Somerset[1]; but in the troublous times of the Dissolution they lost the place, and never recovered it. Their old house has disappeared, but the almshouse they founded in 1449 remains, and still bears their arms. It is a charming building of red brick, forming three sides about a court.

The church of SS. Peter and Paul is a fine cruciform building of considerable interest, consisting of clerestoried nave and chancel, both having aisles, transepts, a central tower and a south porch, a proper Norman plan and, indeed, there can be no doubt that the present building stands on Norman foundations, for we know that it became collegiate in 1165, chiefly through the agency of Roger, archdeacon of Ramsbury, who was the first head of the college, which was later annexed to the deanery of Sarum. It is probable that the church was then rebuilt; and that from east to west: at any rate, the earliest work remaining to-day is the arcades of the chancel which are transitional Norman. The aisles here are additions of 1867. The rest of the church may be said to be of the thirteenth century, the tower and transepts being somewhat earlier than the nave, arcades and chancel clerestory. All has been restored, however. The transepts were altered in the fifteenth century, when the clerestory was added to the nave with its

[1] See *Highways and Byways in Somerset*, p. 72.

square-headed windows, curiously placed over the piers. The waggon roof also dates from this time. In the north transept is the Hungerford chantry chapel, founded in 1421 by that Walter Lord Hungerford who founded the Hungerford chantry in the nave of Sarum Cathedral, and nobly enclosed with a fine four vaulted screen of stone, which still bears his arms. The



Manor House, Knook.

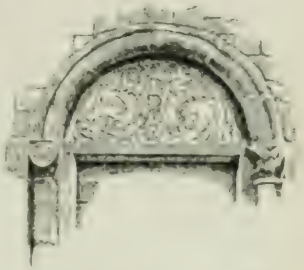
tower has six bells, one of which is medieval. It bears two coats of arms, and the inscription, "✠ INTONAT E CELIS VOX CAMPANE MICHAELIS."[1]

Heytesbury is a place to linger in, a good centre too for exploring all these downs strewn with barrows and camps, and for visiting these churches and villages of the upper Wylye valley.

[1] Is there any record where this bell came from? Did it come from Sherrington?

There is Knook, for instance, a mile below Heytesbury. The church there was restored in 1882, but not so ruthlessly as to hide the fact that it is of Norman foundation. It still can boast Norman work on the chancel arch, while the south door is altogether Norman, and, what is more, has a remarkable tympanum very like to that of Lullington in Somerset,[1] but not so elaborate as that at Little Langford in this valley. It seems to date between 1120 and 1150, and represents a lion or leopard and a dragon feeding on a tree.

What strikes one most, I think, in one's wanderings about all southern England, and not least in this valley of the Wylye is the marvellous preservation of these village churches, all things considered, and their extraordinary variety. No other country can show anything like them. At Knook, for instance, we have Norman work, at Upton Lovell, the next village, we have a church in the main of the seventeenth century, and very charming it is, most lovingly and carefully restored—a consolation and a delight. It is a simple village church dedicated in honour of St. Peter, and its chancel is in the main of the very early thirteenth century, with a fifteenth century window in the south wall. But the nave with the north porch and the vestry date wholly from 1633, as does the beautiful oak roof. The thirteenth century font has been replaced here in the nave from the rectory garden, where for long it was used as a flower vase; and in the floor of the chancel is a small brass representing a priest in Mass vestments of the middle of the fifteenth century. The altar tomb with an effigy in full armour probably holds the dust of one of the Lovells of Castle Cary who held the manor here, and from which Upton Lovell gets its name.



Norman and pre-Norman doorway, Knook Church

At Upton Lovell you are in the seventeenth century with Laud, at the next village, Codford St. Peter, you are wonderfully transported to St. Aldhelm. The church is simple enough.

[1] See *Highways and Byways in Somerset*, p. 202.

A noble Norman font and various fragments in the chancel and south aisle bear witness to the forgotten Norman church that once stood here. Nor is work of the thirteenth century lacking; there is an Early English lancet in the vestry, and better, in the south wall of the chancel very beautiful sedilia similar to those in the Lambert chapel at Boyton on the other side of the valley. The tower, with its fine gargoyles and the doorway with the Hungerford badge, are good fourteenth century work; these remain to remind us of all that has gone before us in spite of the rebuilders who were at work here in 1864. But what are we to say of the amazing sculptured stone found built into the north side of the chancel arch? It is a tall block standing four feet high and tapering from the base, which is about a foot wide, to the top, which is perhaps six inches. Upon it we see carved in front a figure of a man reaching up with his right hand to seize a fruit from a tree, while in his left he holds what appears to be a stone-headed mallet. He is apparently a Saxon, and the manner and style of the whole are just that. According to Mr. Ponting we have here the tapered shaft of a Saxon cross of the tenth century.

Something certainly less interesting, but most curious nevertheless, remains at Codford St. Mary, the neighbouring village. Here of old stood a fine Norman church, as the splendid fragments in the porch are enough to testify. But whatever was standing here in 1843 was pulled down except the tower and a part of the chancel with the chancel arch. The tower is a poor Perpendicular work, but the chancel arch, a double one, is perhaps unique. It consists of two arches, the earlier of which—early Norman—the eastern, was apparently rebuilt when the western —Transitional Norman—was built, so that both are now pointed. The pulpit is late Jacobean. In the organ chamber is a fine Elizabethan altar tomb of Sir Richard Mompesson with mutilated effigy. The altar has a curious history. We are told that when the interior of St. Mary's, Oxford, "was found to be in a disgraceful state after the termination of the reign of the Puritans, Dr. Ralph Bathurst, President of Trinity College and Dean of Wells, who was Vice-Chancellor soon after the Restoration, gave £300 towards fitting it up in a decent manner for university sermons. Sir Christopher Wren superintended the work. Among other articles of oak carving was a pulpit, which in consequence of the alterations largely made in the interior of that church by the

kindness of a Fellow of Merton College, came into the possession of the author, who has availed himself of the suggestion of the Rev. T. Miles of Stockton, by converting it into a communion table."

It is here at Codford St. Mary that one may better than anywhere else on this side the stream comprehend the whole vale and appreciate what it is, its nobleness and humility. Here it was that Cobbett wished the good people of the north country might come. "If they could but go up from that city of Salisbury, up the Valley of the Wylye to Warminster, and there see one and thirty churches in the space of twenty-seven miles; if they could but go upon the top of the down, as I did, not far (I think it was) from Codford St. Mary, and there have under the eye in the valley below ten parish churches within the distance of eight miles, see the Downs covered with innumerable flocks of sheep, water meadows running down the middle of the valley, while the sides rising from it were covered with corn, sometimes a hundred acres of wheat in one single piece, while the stackyards were still well stored from the previous harvest. . . ." It is a glorious picture, and if it has changed to-day, it has only become more peaceful and serene, and remains for ever one of the most characteristic of our southern vales on the verge of the west.

The last church in this valley which should be visited is that of All Saints, Steeple Langford. That a Norman church once stood here is attested by the font and the arches of the fourteenth century tower with Perpendicular belfry and the chancel arch. The only thirteenth century feature left to us is the lancet in the north side of the tower. The church as a whole is that rare thing in Wiltshire—a work of the fourteenth century in Decorated style. Note the south wall of the nave, which is a fine piece of work, with its two old windows and the less good arcade of three bays between the nave and the north or Mompesson aisle. This aisle is not so fine as the south part of the nave, but it boasts a fourteenth century doorway and some fifteenth century windows. It has its own coeval roof and four of its old oak benches and a desk carved with poppy heads. In the north wall is the elaborate Perpendicular altar tomb of the Mompesson family charged with five shields bearing arms. Here, too, is another altar tomb.

But the most notable thing in the church is the curious

sepulchral slab of Purbeck incised with the figure of a huntsman, certainly a twelfth century work, and perhaps representing a Waleran, a landowner in the parish, descended from that one of his name who had been huntsman to William the Conqueror, and Ranger of the New Forest. Across the stream at Little Langford, as we have seen, St. Aldhelm is commemorated. It is as though here in England time were not and we one with our fathers.

CHAPTER X

THE WINTERBOURNE VALLEY

The Wylye Valley receives at Serrington below Steeple Langford the valley of the Winterbourne and that from the north. This stream flooding down from the fastnesses of the Plain in winter, for the most part dry in summer, is not to be counted among the five streams of Salisbury; not only because it joins the Wylye so far from the city, but really because of its intermittence, it is in fact, as its name implies, little more than a winter flood. Nevertheless the fact that it runs into the Wylye as it does, almost at a right angle, is not without its importance, for it forms thus one side of a salient similar to, though not so strong as, that which gives Wilton most of its importance. Wilton, however, is defended by two considerable streams, the Wylye and the Nadder. Serrington, occupying a similar position, is of course far less strongly held, since the Winterbourne is in summer almost dry. It is possible that this may account for the fact that Serrington itself is not now and never has been more than a tiny village. We must look elsewhere for the inhabitation of this salient, and we shall find it on the great Downs that rise here between the two valleys at Yarnbury Castle, one of the most interesting, elaborate and puzzling prehistoric hill forts in all Wiltshire. A somewhat similar prehistoric camp crowns the heights upon the salient about which Wylye and Nadder meet; but these great defences might seem to have but little unity, at least as we find them; here, on the contrary, we have a very definite thing, and though it is so complex we can be in no doubt as to its form and even its limits. Defended westward by the steep escarpments of the high ground thrust out between the two valleys, of the watershed that is, eastward, its entrance is wonderfully defended by a

complicated art very much the same as that we see at Maiden Castle, Dorchester, and other camps of the Early Iron Age.

Serrington in the very arms of Wylye and Winterbourne is but a group of houses; the medieval village one might expect to find here is on the further side of the stream at Stapleford, but the medieval stronghold all the same will be found on the western bank, though half a mile above Serrington, where the moated site of the old Norman castle may still be seen.

Stapleford stands on the eastern bank of the Winterbourne. It is an ancient place and is mentioned in the Domesday Survey when it was the property of Waleran *Venator*, the ancestor of that Waleran whose monument we have seen at Steeple Langford. It remained with this family till 1200. A hundred and seventy years or more later the manor was divided, and we hear of Stapleford and Stapleford Matravers, but the division was not clear in lands but according to tenantry. Lord Matravers appears in 1379, before him the whole manor was held by Sir John de Monemue, who in 1280 was hanged for the murder of the priest here. A gate near the castle on the western bank of the Winterbourne is still known as Slay Gate, and local tradition asserts it was here Sir John was executed.

That Stapleford is at least as old as the Normans its church would prove. This is an ancient building dedicated in honour of Our Lady, of flint and stone, consisting of chancel, nave of four bays, south aisle, porch and transept with an embattled and pinnacled tower on the north. The Norman work as seen in the fine south doorway and the noble arcade between the nave and the south aisle is of the middle of the twelfth century, and very good it is. The font is somewhat later, and now stands on a modern base.

Of thirteenth century work nothing, or almost nothing, is to be seen here; but in the fourteenth century the fine clerestory was added to the nave, and the chancel and the south aisle were rebuilt, the latter being then widened at its eastern end to form a chapel like a transept. This south aisle is very narrow, and doubtless stands on the ancient Norman foundations, the fourteenth century windows on either side the door remain. The chapel still possesses its original roof with cornice and two gargoyles; the only window is curious but ancient.

The chancel of the fourteenth century for the most part remains to us, but its east end was rebuilt in 1869, the old

window being replaced, however, and over it, without, a fine sculptured panel of the Crucifixion was set. In the south hall is the priest's door with good windows on either side, one of them still keeping a bit of old glass, and the windows on the north wall are also ancient. The exquisite triple sedilia and piscina should be noticed, but the carved head terminals have been spoilt, and only one of the finials has escaped the restorer.

Turning to the north side of the church the tower is to be noted. It is in two stages, the lower of which of the fourteenth century once perhaps formed a chapel. It still has a fine Decorated window. The north aisle is later, and the window at the eastern end is of the fifteenth century.

The small porch, originally of two storeys, though now all one, is very charming. Especially to be noticed is the fine fourteenth century coffin slab here with the incised cross on the top.

A mile above Stapleford the road, winding as it goes, crosses the Winterbourne and enters the village of Berwick St. James. The church of St. James stands between the road and the stream. It is an interesting but small cruciform building of flint and stone, consisting of chancel, north porch, clerestoried nave, north and south chapels and Norman embattled western tower. The north porch by which we enter is Perpendicular, but the door within is a fine Norman work with zig-zag ornament. The font is also Norman. In the Early English south chapel is a piscina. The fine stone pulpit is Perpendicular.

The church of old boasted, according to Murray, two very interesting things: an ancient fresco over the east window of the chancel, which Hoare does not mention, and which if it were ever there seems to have disappeared under the recent colour wash, and a very rare though even in Wiltshire not quite unique[1] thirteenth century chalice now in the British Museum. These splendid things may have been due to the fact that the church belonged to the Priory of Mottisfont in Hampshire, an Augustinian house which held it till the Dissolution; but how the

[1] An example at least as fine, and having also the greater part of the paten of the same date is in the sacristy of Salisbury Cathedral. They are supposed to have been taken from Bishop Longespee's tomb. Illustrated in *Wilts. Arch. Mag.* xxvi. 329. The one at Berwick St. James is illustrated *ibid.* xxi. 369.

chalice, which is of silver-gilt, escaped the greed and vandalism of the Reformation is difficult to explain. Perhaps in this lonely and unfrequented valley men were less eager for novelties and less brutally set upon silver and gold.

Certainly the valley is lonely enough to-day. Was it always so? According to Cobbett it was not. "At Stapleford," he writes, "there is a little cross valley, running up between two hills of the down. There is a little run of water about a yard wide at this time, coming down this little vale across the road into the (Wylye) river. The little vale runs up three miles. It does not appear to be half a mile wide; but in these three miles there are four churches—namely, Stapleford, Uppington, Berwick St. James, and Winterbourne Stoke. The present population of these four villages is 769 souls, men, women, and children; the whole of whom could very conveniently be seated in the chancel of the church at Stapleford. Indeed, the church and parish of Uppington seem to have been united with one of the other parishes like the parish in Kent which was united with North Cray and not a single house of which now remains. What were these four churches *built for* within the distance of three miles? The parish of Winterbourne Stoke has a church sufficient to contain two or three thousand people." It is possible that in medieval times the population of this valley was larger than it now is; but it is not likely. Cobbett's argument will not hold—he thinks like a Protestant. In Catholic days churches were not necessarily built to the measure of the population, they were built for the honour of God whose houses they were. Therefore they were built as fine and large and splendid as could be without any regard to the numbers who were likely to worship in them. Westminster Abbey, for instance, had a "congregation" at most of eighty monks; Romsey Abbey of not more than thirty nuns, yet see how great they be, not in our service but for the honour of God.

The church of St. Peter at Winterbourne Stoke, a mile above Berwick St. James, but on the other side of the valley, is ample enough, but I doubt that it would hold three thousand people. It is an ancient building of flint and stone consisting of chancel, nave, transepts, north porch and central embattled tower. There are two beautiful Norman doorways in the nave. The chancel arch is Transitional, and the east window is a charming triple lancet of the Early English time. The arch leading into

the south transept is a pure Early English work. In the chancel is a good piscina and aumbry, both of the fourteenth century. There is also a similar piscina in the south transept. The pulpit dates from 1621.

Winterbourne Stoke is mentioned in the Domesday Survey. In 1331 the church belonged to the alien priory of Hayling, which was a cell to Jumièges. When the alien priories were suppressed the church here passed to the monastery of Shene, a Charterhouse founded by Henry V.

Beyond Winterbourne Stoke the valley widens and grows lonelier than ever, the Downs come down to it till it is almost one with them; it grows richer, too, in prehistoric remains, earthworks, barrows, and British villages. Two of these last lie above the vale to the east of the stream to the north and south of the Amesbury road between Winterbourne Stoke and Rollestone. To reach them it is best to take the byway running north from the inn at Winterbourne Stoke which will bring you also to Rollestone Church.

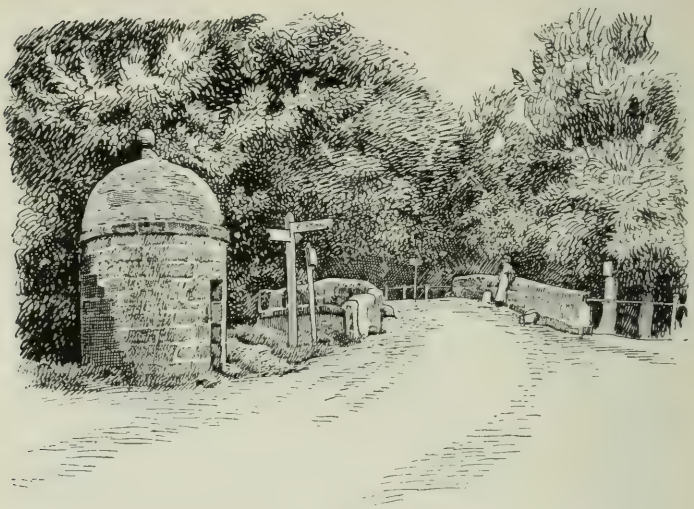
This is dedicated in honour of St. Andrew, and is delightfully situated on a hill. It is a small ancient building of the usual flint and stone, for the most part Early English in style, and consists of chancel, nave, south porch and western turret. It was restored in 1845, but enough of an older building remains to make it worth a visit. The church is interesting too as having been, from 1331 to the Dissolution, in the patronage of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

Shrewton, just beyond Rollestone is, I suppose, the capital of the valley, a pretty and homely place among these lonely downs. Unfortunately, the church of Our Lady there was rebuilt in 1854, and though certain fine Norman, Early English, and Decorated details remain, all has been restored a little disastrously. It must have been a fine building in its day, interesting too for this, that it was in the gift of the Earls of Sarum, and Ela Countess of Sarum in her own right presented it to her abbey of Lacock.

Shrewton to-day, however, is fast becoming a military centre, and forgetting the Middle Age. And yet I don't know. It is at Shrewton that the only hawking club in England is established. There you may still see the falconers all in Lincoln green, with their beautiful great birds, setting out for the Plain. How long Shrewton can hold the sport I am doubtful. For hawking

needs a very spacious run of unenclosed country, and even here much of the Plain is wired. With the passing of the falconers, the Middle Age will altogether have departed from Shrewton.

Beyond Shrewton lie Maddington and Orcheston St. George and Orcheston St. Mary. These are in the very midst of the Plain, on a lowland that is an oasis in that it is cultivated, and, because of the Winterbourne, bears crops. All around is the lonely Plain, over which a man may wander unhindered



The Blind House, Shrewton.

all day long and meet no one. Only the grass covers the bare chalk, and there the sheep live, watered maybe at a dew pond here and there.

It was upon these great spaces of bare down that one summer afternoon I met a shepherd who explained to me what till then I had never understood—the mystery of a dew pond.

It is obvious that if, as is certain, our neolithic ancestors lived in great communities upon these downs, which are, being chalk, so thirsty, they could only have done so if by some means or other they were able to obtain and to store that

without which life is impossible—water. For the more the question of ancient life is studied upon these hills, the more it becomes certain that the camps on the Downs were not mere refuges in time of danger, but were permanent habitations, that they were the nightly refuge of sheep and cattle in danger from the wolves, and that the innumerable trenches and hollow ways which may still be seen leading to them, were the tracks of the herds and flocks passing up every night from the villages below. Close by the camp, as often as not, is the dew pond, which in many instances is as old as the camp itself. What then are the "thermodynamics" of a dew pond, how is it formed, and how preserved, so that it has endured sometimes even till to-day? It is asserted—and this my shepherd certainly believed—that there is still in the south country a wandering gang of men who can and do build for the farmers or their shepherds one or more of these ponds which everywhere upon the dry downs will never fail of water even in the fiercest summer heat; nay, which will possess more water in the dog days than in the winter rains. This water, according to my shepherd, is not due to secret springs or to any rainfall, indeed, it is lost at once if even the smallest trickle of surface water flows into the pond. The mystery of the craft must perhaps be seen to be understood. It seems, however, that in the making of a dew pond the first thing to do is to dig or hollow out a space far larger than that required for the water. All this is then thickly covered with dry straw, which in its turn is overlaid with clay, puddled and even, and upon this is closely packed a layer of stones. If all has been well and truly done, if the straw is properly covered with the clay, the pond will, slowly at first, but ever more rapidly, be filled with water, even though no rain should fall. It seems a miracle, but like all miracles of the kind is to be explained by natural laws, it seems. For it is obvious that in the long summer sunshine the earth stores up much heat, but the pond in its lap does not receive it owing to the layer of straw beneath it, for straw is a non-conductor of heat. The puddled clay, therefore, remains cool by process of evaporation, and therefore at night the moisture of the air condenses on the surface of the clay, and as this nightly condensation is in excess of the daily evaporation, the pond becomes gradually full of water. Should the straw become wet, as it will do if the least rivulet run into the pond, the clay will be-

come of the same temperature as the down about it, and all will so be spoiled. A mere traveller like myself can only admire the wisdom of our forefathers and the cunning of those who begat us.

There is not in all Wiltshire, I think, a lonelier road than that which lies up over the Downs between Shrewton and Tilshead. In old days, just after the Conquest, Tilshead had sixty-six burgesses and nine mills, was as large as Calne, and twice as large as War



Orcheston St. Mary.

minster ; to-day it is a mere village, with a church that would look empty if every soul in the place were gathered into it. So it seemed to me, as I stood in the fine Transitional building, with its great chancel and clerestoried nave between which rises a low central tower. How many generations of men between then and now have received their baptism at that Norman font ; how much love and delight must have gone to the building of that beautiful south aisle with its Decorated work. Perhaps

this was the Lady Chapel, here men assembled e'er they went to their labour for the earliest Mass of all in honour of her who bore the Dayspring in her arms. And in winter here for sure the boys in their shrill trebles sang *Alma Redemptoris* in the falling afternoon.

> "Among thise children was a widwes sone,
> A litel clergeon, seven yeer of age,
> That day by day to scole was his wone,
> And eek also, where as he saugh th' image
> Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,
> As him was taught, to knele adoun and seye
> His *Ave Maria*, as he goth by the weye.
>
> This litel child, his litel book lerninge,
> As he sat in the scole at his prymer,
> He *Alma Redemptoris* herde singe,
> As children lerned hir antiphoner;
> And, as he dorste, he drough him ner and ner,
> And herkned ay the wordes and the note,
> Til he the firste vers coude al by rote."

Not far from Tilshead, over the Plain, upon the road to West Lavington and Devizes, there stands a stone which bears the following inscription:

"At this spot Mr. Dean of Imber was attacked and robbed by Four Highwaymen in the evening of October 21, 1830. After a spirited pursuit of three hours, one of the Felons, Benjamin Colclough, fell dead on Chilterne Down. Thos: Saunders, George Waters, and Richard Harris were eventually captured, and were convicted at the ensuing Quarter Sessions at Devizes, and transported for the term of 15 years. This monument erected by public subscription as a warning to those who presumptuously think to escape the punishment God has threatened against Thieves and Robbers."

Imber lies away on the plain eastward, perhaps four miles from Tilshead. On the way one passes the site of a "British village." The place is about as lonely as could well be imagined, but is worth a visit if only for the sake of its church of St. Giles, one of the seven with this dedication in the county. The plan is simple, it consists of nave with north and south aisles, north porch and western tower, and these are the ancient parts of the church. The chancel was built in 1849. The oldest thing in the church we see is the late Norman font. It bears witness to the Norman church that once stood here, as does the

narrowness of the early fifteenth century aisles, for presumably they are so narrow because they stand on Norman foundations. It was in the late thirteenth century, however, that the church was first taken in hand. At that time the nave arcades were built. When the aisles were built in the early fifteenth century the nave was re-roofed as we see it, and the north porch and tower built. The tower is curious in that it has five corners, owing to the turret staircase. The beautiful recessed tomb in the south aisle, with the effigy of a knight, is probably that of the benefactor of the church. A piscina, all that remains of his chantry, is close to the tomb. Another effigy of a man lies under the last bay of the south arcade, his head on a pillow guarded by angels, his feet upon a lion. His shield bears his arms, three leopards rampant, but we do not know his name or family. These tombs alone make a visit to the church worth while. But in the windows of the south aisle and tower there are some fragments of old glass, and the seventeenth century pulpit, pews and benches are very fine of their kind. The oval window in the south aisle dates from the eighteenth century.

From Imber it is possible to make one's way over the Plain to Chitterne All Saints and Chitterne St. Mary, a kind of oasis where the Plain brings forth fruit in due season. There is nothing to be seen of much interest in either place, unless it be the chancel of the old church and a mortuary chapel at Chitterne St. Mary. A new church has been built (1861) at Chitterne All Saints for both parishes. From the Chitternes one may go over the plain either to Shrewton on the Winterbourne or to Codford St. Mary on the Wylye.

CHAPTER XI

THE VALLEY OF THE NADDER

THE valley of the Nadder, though by no means the most important of the five which meet in the Salisbury meads, is, if we consider it in its whole reach, by far the largest; indeed at its widest it cannot be much less than six miles across. This widest part is, curiously enough, in its upper reaches upon the Dorset border, for the river rises in Winscombe Park near Shaftesbury, and beyond Semley runs down an ever-narrowing funnel formed by the great downs: White Sheet Hill, Fovant Down and Compton Down running north-east, upon the south, the watershed between it and the Ebble and the wooded heights of the Great Ridge Wood, Chilmark Down and Groveley running south-east, upon the north, the watershed between it and the Wylye water. Thus it is by a narrow gate that the Nadder enters the meads of Sarum at Wilton, but the traveller who from that town shall follow the river westward to its source will find himself making his way up an ever-widening vale with but one place of the slightest importance actually upon the stream, Tisbury, but with many fair villages dotted north and south upon the hillsides, those on the north, indeed, seeming to have nothing more in common with those on the south than they have with the villages of the vale of Wylye or of the valley of the Ebble. This is as much as to say that the valley of the Nadder is without unity. If that is true, and I think it is, we must confess that it is the only valley in all Wiltshire which is so lacking, nay, more, which is without a most living personality. That want of unity is emphasised at once and at the very outset for the traveller by the fact that when he comes to explore this vale he is confronted not more than two miles above Wilton by the necessity of a choice of roads; he must follow the way to

Fonthill and Hindon and Mere to the north of the stream or the way to Donhead and Shaftesbury to the south; and the choice there thrust upon him is something much more than a choice of ways such as he has met at Great Wishford in the Wylye Vale, by the north or south bank of the stream, for the choice is a final one. All the way up the other valleys of the Plain it is easy, nay, you are constantly invited, to cross from one bank to the other; here you find no invitation. If you go by the northern road you are not only cut off from the southern but you are in an entirely different country. The valley is indeed so divided against itself that it has but one place in common—Tisbury, which for that reason has a curious importance and interest. It holds the Nadder as no other town or village within its influence can be said to do. It is, and rightly, the capital of the vale.

Wilton, of course, which upon the south is defended by the Nadder, makes by far the most use of the stream, but even so, its very name tells us that it considered the Wylye as its true defence and life. Beyond Wilton, going up stream along the northern bank, stands Barford St. Martin, whose whole importance certainly comes from the fact that it commands the main, if not the lowest, crossing-place in the valley, before, married with Wylye, the stream comes out of the valley into the Salisbury meads. That Barford was not the lowest crossing-place seems as certain as that it was always the most important. Nearly two miles nearer Wilton there still remains the tiny village of Ugford, which has grown up about a ford. Ugford may mean, I suppose, the narrow ford. It consisted of two manors, north and south, in the latter of which stood a cross, and opposite the cross a chapel dedicated in honour of St. James, near "The Vennel," which was Burcombe Lane, the continuation of the Netherhampton road through Washerne.[1] All belonged, of course, to the Abbey of Wilton, and is full of interest for us. No doubt originally the chapel was founded to keep the ford; even its dedication is significant.

North Burcombe, too, is not without interest, for its little church of St. John Baptist is older than the Normans. The square-ended chancel has traces of Saxon work still, and bears

[1] The chapel stood in Earthpit Field on the left before coming to the present dairy; the cross stood on the right. See *W.A.M.* xxxii. 300.

witness to a church which stood here more than four hundred years before that we now see was thought of; and when in 1190 Bishop Herbert founded his hospital of St. John, Ditchampton, which we now call St. John's Hospital, Wilton, this church was attached to it.

Barford St. Martin lies a mile beyond North Burcombe on the north side of the Nadder at the head of the main crossing of that stream as, indeed, its name suggests, for it means the river ford, and is thrice thus used in Wiltshire. It is a pleasant and happy place set where the hills at last come down to the vale and the meadows, and within two miles of Groveley Wood on the other side of which in the Wylye Vale is the village of Great Wishford. I have already said something of Wishford and Barford. The people of these two villages had the right to go into Groveley Wood to get wood for burning, and each person was entitled to take home as much as he or she could carry. The Wishford folk take the greenwood, but the Barford people only the dead, for long since they sold their right to the greenwood to the lord of the manor, the Earl of Pembroke, for an annual payment of five pounds.

"Be zix a'clock, a motley crowd
Av met at Tweaseal tree
Beath woold an' young, var ta keep up
Thease glad vestivity.
We axe an' hook away they goo
Ta copse at Groveley
Ta cut tha woaken boughs out vrom
Tha merry greenhood tree.

An up agean ache cottage dooer
Tha woaken bough is tied
We vlaigs an' streamers gay an bright
An' mottoes too bezide.
Tis 'Groveley'; an' ael 'Groveley,'
Thame shouten ael tha day
Ta keep thic hankshent custom up
On girt Woak Apple Day."[1]

The custom thus laudably sung is of very great antiquity, perhaps older than Christianity,[2] and for ages before the Restoration of King Charles II. it had taken place at Whitsuntide, but thereafter was performed upon Oak Apple Day (May 29). The

[1] Edward Slow: *Wiltshire Rhymes*, Pt. I. 150.
[2] See Rev. Chr. Wordsworth in *W.A.M.* xxxv. 285 *et seq.*

custom was as follows: "The lords freeholders tenants and inhabitants of the Manor of Great Wishford, or so many of them as would, in ancient time used to go on a dance to the Cathedral church of our Blessed Lady in the City of New Sarum on (Whit) Tuesday in the said county of Wilts, and there made their claims to their custom in the Forest of Groveley in these words: 'GROVELEY! GROVELEY!! AND ALL GROVELEY!!!'

"The Lords, Freeholders, Tenants, and Inhabitants of the Manor of Barford St. Martin or so many of them as would, in ancient times used also to go the same day on a like dance to the said Cathedral church and there made their claim to their customs in the said Forest in like manner in these words: 'GROVELEY! GROVELEY!! GROVELEY!!!'"

Now it seems that when Groveley Wood passed, as it did at the Dissolution, into the hands of the Earls of Pembroke, this custom soon became an annoyance to the noble owners. They had to put up with it, however, and it was not till some fifty or more years ago that any definite attempt was made at suppression. At that time, however, the then Earl of Pembroke suddenly made up his mind that the people of Barford at any rate *had nothing to show* in support of their right to the dead wood. He seems to have convinced himself that it was only by his gracious permission that they gathered the same. Therefore he issued an edict forbidding this privilege for the future, and so great was his authority in modern England that not a man dared to protest. A woman did, however. Grace Reed, of Barford, dared to oppose the great noble, and with four other women of the village she went to the wood, gathered her sticks and brought them home. Mr. W. H. Hudson tells the tale: "They were summoned before the magistrates and fined, and in their refusal to pay were sent to prison; but the very next day they were liberated and told that a mistake had been made, that the matter had been inquired into, and it had been found that the people of Barford did really have the right they had exercised so long to take dead wood from the forest." That right has not since been challenged. It is not a pleasant spectacle this great Earl, with his glorious palace, his world-renowned garden, his priceless pictures and treasures of art, his enormous wealth, grudging the village folk their few sticks from his wood. And he would have taken those sticks from them too but for the courage of Grace Reed.

The church of Barford St. Martin is worth a visit, for it is an ancient building, cruciform in shape, under a central tower, but without aisles, and as we see it, it dates chiefly from the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. Under an arch south of the altar is a curious effigy in a winding sheet. In the south transept is a brass on which is a figure of a woman kneeling; just outside the churchyard towards the village is a restored cross. A mile south-west on the other side the Nadder stands Hurdcott House, a much restored Jacobean mansion of 1631.

It is at Barford, as I have said, that the road divides, the way along the northern bank of the Nadder soon running into the hills over the valley under the Great Ridge Wood, while that along the south bank presently passes too into the southern hills under White Sheet Hill. There is no road that passes up the valley within reach of the stream, though the northern way clings closer to it, and for longer than the southern.

It was by this way I went. And first I came to Baverstock church, a mile or more beyond Barford. This church, which from very ancient times belonged to the abbey of Wilton, is finely situated, and has one interesting thing left to it, for it has suffered much from restoration—I mean its dedication in honour of St. Edith, a very rare dedication. It was once, for the most part, a building of the fourteenth century in the Decorated style of that time, but was considerably restored in 1883. The village lies nearly half a mile away behind it under the hills, and like so many of the villages of these vales is scarcely suspected by the traveller.

At Baverstock church the road begins to leave the stream, and presently comes into the village of Dinton. Here two famous men were born, Henry Lawes, the musician and friend of Milton, and Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon. Henry Lawes was born here in 1596, his father being a vicar choral of Salisbury. He received his early education in music from Giovanni Coprario (Cooper), who according to Wood "was an Englishman borne, who having spent much of his time in Italy, was there called Coprario, which name he kept when he returned to England." Lawes was sworn in a pisteller or epistler of the Chapel Royal on January 1st, 1625, and after became a member of the King's band. Later he entered the Earl of Bridgwater's household and it was then "being required to provide an entertainment

and being well acquainted with Mr. Milton's abilities he pitched on him to compose the Masque." If this be true, as it probably is, it is to Lawes that we owe "Comus," the songs of which he set to music and performed at Ludlow Castle on Michaelmas night, 1634. His high appreciation of Milton's work appears in his dedication of the poem to the son and heir of the Earl of Bridgwater. Milton's name does not anywhere appear, but Lawes says: "although not openly acknowledged by the author, yet it is a legitimate offspring, so lovely and so much desired, that the often copying of it hath tir'd my pen to give my severall friends satisfaction . . . ." Whether it was his love of Milton that carried him into the Civil War against the King I know not, but he fell at the siege of Chester, 1645.

> "Harry, whose tuneful and well measured song
> First taught our English music how to span
> Words with just note and accent."

So Milton sings of him with a sublime disregard or an amazing ignorance of even the name William Byrd.

Tradition says nothing of the house here in which Harry was born, but has been eager to point out that of the author of the history of the Great Rebellion. Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, and Lord Chancellor of England, was the third son of the squire of Dinton, and is said to have been born in the old parsonage house, which stood where now we find the school. He lived, as we know, to see his daughter Anne marry James, Duke of York, the king's brother, but his end was miserable. He, who had been so manifestly fortunate, died an exile in France, forbidden as he wished even "to die in his own country." They buried him in Westminster Abbey, but no monument marks his grave.

Several members of Clarendon's family are commemorated in the church, which is a noble building. Of old it belonged to the abbey of Shaftesbury. It is a large cruciform building with central tower of Transitional Norman, Early English and Decorated work, a typical English country church which restoration has not really spoilt. The manor passed in 1689 by sale to the Wyndham family, and it is in their park that the church stands.

On the Downs above the village is Wick Ball Camp, a large earthwork surrounded by a single ditch in a woodland. Beyond this camp stands Marshwood House.

From Dinton one may go on by the highway to one of the prettiest villages in the valley, Teffont Ewyas, or from Marshwood House there is a way over the down, which presently brings you down to Teffont Magna, twin sister to Teffont Ewyas, and close beside it between the green and wooded hills. In this little retired valley, delicious with running brooks, stands the village of Teffont Ewyas, older than Domesday Book, in which it appears as Teffont only. Its surname of Ewyas it gets from a barony in Herefordshire, in the thirteenth century, when Ralph de Ewyas granted his lands at Teffont to Godfridus de Ewyas. These presently passed to the Tergoz family by marriage, and after passing to the Hussies and others, came in 1545, by grant of the crown, to the Leys of Devon, one of whom became Earl of Marlborough (d. 1628). The manor house, built perhaps by the Leys, perhaps by their immediate predecessors, the Hungerfords of Farleigh, still remains a nobly beautiful English house. But there is something better in Teffont even than this mansion, and the old parsonage which is also worth a visit. I mean the church, which in spite of rebuilding (*circa* 1830) has remains of its ancient beauty.

It is a building consisting of nave, with north aisle and north-western tower, and spire and south porch, and a chancel with a chantry chapel on the north. For the most part the church we see is of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and it seems probable that the chantry, which is still divided from the church by an oak screen, was built by the Hungerfords. There, however, nothing remains concerning them, the monument with the recumbent effigies being that of their successors the Leys, Henry Ley (d. 1574) and his sons, who received Teffont from the crown. Above are their arms, and beneath a long Latin inscription.

It is but a step, as I say, from Teffont Ewyas to Teffont Magna, and there too the church, scarce more than a chapel, is worth seeing, for it is an ancient building of stone with an Early English south porch and an oak screen, which alone divides nave from chancel.

The reason why these churches are built of stone instead of the usual flints becomes apparent to us when we see the quarries, a mile to the south of the road between Teffont and the next village westward, Chilmark. They are very ancient and very famous, were probably known to the Romans, and

certainly supplied the stone for Sarum Cathedral. On their account, if for no other cause, we might expect to find a noble church at Chilmark, and we are not disappointed, though restoration has done its worst to spoil it. Here we have a cruciform building, dedicated in honour of St. Margaret, under a central tower and spire consisting of aisles, nave, transepts and chancel, for the most part scraped and rebuilt, but with still a Norman doorway and spoiled Norman windows too on the north.

Chilmark belonged to the abbey of Wilton till the Dissolution, when it was granted to the Earl of Pembroke. It produced, it seems, one notable man, that John de Chilmark, a famous mathematician in the time of Richard II., of whom Fuller speaks in his "Worthies": "he was a diligent searcher into the mysteries of nature, an acute philosopher and disputant; but his skill was most remarkable in mathematics, being accounted the Archimedes of that age, having written many tracts in that faculty which carry him with a very good regard at this day." Who remembers aught concerning him to-day?

The highway goes on down past the church at Chilmark, and then climbs up the further down, and then down again through the pretty village of Fonthill Bishop, where the church is a modern rebuilding, and so on to Berwick St. Leonard. Here too, alas! the church has been rebuilt, but something remained of the old manor house of the time of James I., the seat of the Howes, where, in 1688, William Prince of Orange slept upon his way from Torbay to London, till the year 1904, when it was bodily removed to a site on the little ridge near Chilmark, so that nothing remains at Berwick to-day that is from antiquity. Nor indeed is Hindon, the little market town beyond, much more fortunate. Its chief, if not its only memories seem to be of those old bad days as we must think them, when it returned members to Parliament and after such a fashion that it is said when a member returned thanks for the honour of election he was told not to trouble himself, "for if the squire had zent his great dog we should have chosen him all one as if it were you, zur." Thus I suppose Monk Lewis was elected for Hindon and Henry Fox also, who was afterwards Lord Holland. William Beckford, the author of "Vathek," and Squire of Fonthill too, sat for Hindon from 1790–4 and 1806–20. The place was deprived of its parliamentary honour in 1832.

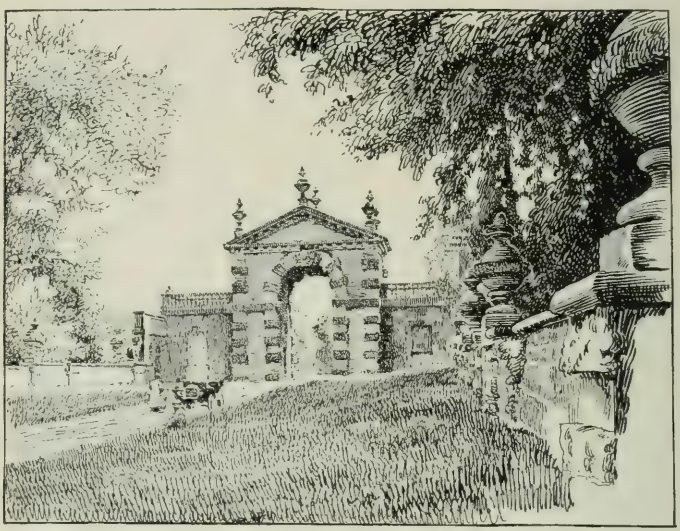
No, if we seek antiquity here and would not be disappointed, we must climb up on to the northern downs above Chicklade and wander in the Great Ridge Wood, that wild natural forest of stunted oaks through which certainly a British trackway and perhaps a Roman road ran westward from Old Sarum to the Mendips. There at least we are in the presence of something older than any monument, nor if it be monuments we seek, shall we be altogether disappointed. For to westward is the lonely church, a tiny place, of Pertwood, a little Norman building admirable in this loneliness.

In spite of the strange beauty of these hills one comes down at last with a sort of relief, I think, and passing again through Hindon comes to Fonthill Gifford between the woods of Fonthill Abbey and Fonthill House.

It is at Fonthill that we come upon what, when all is said, is the most fantastic story to be found in Wiltshire, or for that matter in all the south country. It is the story—I cannot call it the romance—of William Beckford, known to all the world as the author of "Vathek," that strange Arabian tale.

William Beckford the elder, twice Lord Mayor of London town, the friend of William Pitt, and the father of the most fantastic and ineffectual genius in English literature, and a very rich man, bought Fonthill House and its estate early in life, and there in 1759 his only son was born. The elder Beckford, who was a man of considerable ability and character, unfortunately for the future author, died when his son was but eleven years old, and in consequence the boy was educated at home, instead of at Westminster, and when he came of age, after his long minority, he inherited a fortune of a million sterling, and an income of 100,000 pounds a year. William Beckford the younger had early shown artistic talent, had received instruction in music from Mozart himself, and had been noticed by Chatham, who asserted he was "all air and fire." It is said that Chatham warned him not to read the "Arabian Nights"; it is certainly curious in the light of what followed. The truth is that the boy was utterly spoilt, capricious and extravagant, wilful rather than vicious, and without any sense of responsibility; he might have been saved from a hopeless egotism by the discipline of a public school, or from a sterile ambition by the experience of life at Oxford: both these were denied him. He went abroad, wandered from

Genoa to the Low Countries and Italy, and in 1783, at the age of twenty-four, published anonymously a book of "Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents, in a series of letters from various parts of Europe," which he was soon ashamed of and suppressed. But before this, in 1781 and 1782, he had written in French the weird and fantastic tale, and that in a single sitting of three days and two nights, by which his name was to be established as a writer. "Vathek," the finest oriental story



Gateway, Fonthill.

in European literature, is the *tour de force* of an amateur, but an amateur of genius. Written, like everything he wrote, without effort, it is an amazing success if only in this, that it combines the fantastic and the sublime in a way very rare outside the "Arabian Nights" themselves. An English version which was almost instantly successful was published anonymously and surreptitiously in 1784. In the previous year he had married Lady Margaret Gordon, and with her he lived in Switzerland, till her death in 1786. Then he went to Portugal, and there wrote the letters published many years later, which

are perhaps his most valuable work. After visiting Spain and Paris more than once in 1792, he went to Lausanne, where he bought Gibbon's Library, and is said to have shut himself up to read it. Two years later he returned to Portugal and built himself the paradise at Cintra which Byron celebrated in verse.

In 1796, however, he returned to Fonthill, his old home, and immediately began to rebuild the house on a grand scale. This, however, did not please or satisfy him. In his mind he had visions of the palaces of Arabia, the great Gothic ruins of his own country, the splendour of Italy, the luxury of Portugal. Something of all this he proposed now to realise here on the Downs. A huge wall, seven miles long and twelve feet high, he first built about the domain, and then Wyatt the destroyer of Salisbury Cathedral and many another beautiful work of the true Middle Age, received a commission to build a new house, or rather palace, to be called "Fonthill Abbey," though no abbey had ever stood there, "a convent partly in ruins and partly perfect." Indeed it remained for the arid materialism of the eighteenth century to find pleasure in ruins, to discover delight in the contemplation of destruction and decay. Nor was that age to be satisfied with the genuine and broken walls of Tintern, and its fellows. Where such tragic things as these happily did not exist its snobbism contrived them, actually building sham ruins in a country of ruins to satisfy an equally sham romanticism and a real vulgarity. Yet like all snobbism, this of the eighteenth century was due rather to vulgarity and ignorance than to mere savagery. The rich men who built such things had never heard of the Middle Age, and only considered the supposed social distinction conferred by the possession of the last fragments of an unknown civilisation. Their ignorance of the very origins of their civilisation is not surprising when we remember that Gibbon wrote his "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" in sublime indifference to the thirteenth century and in utter ignorance of its meaning. So Wyatt, the vandal, built Fonthill "Abbey," a sham convent half in ruins for this dreamer of sham Oriental obscenities. Adding blasphemy to his snobbism he contrived the place in the form of a cross of equal arms, a great octagonal tower rising from the midst, "an orgy of reckless Gothic," nay, rather a monkey house of shameless and inhuman mimicry. Having sold the beautiful furniture collected

by his sensible old father, Beckford began to buy a museum of questionable treasures. Hazlitt describes the place and its furnishing: "It is a desert of magnificence, a glittering waste of laborious idleness, a cathedral turned into a toy shop, an immense museum of all that is most curious and costly, and at the same time most worthless in the productions of art and nature." The depths of ignorant and shameless vulgarity exhibited in this menagerie are almost incredible. At Christmas, in 1800, Nelson visited Fonthill with Sir William and Lady Hamilton. A vast reception was prepared for them. They arrived in postchaises and were received in "The Cardinal's Parlour" furnished "strictly in monastic taste." The dishes they ate from were "in the massy style and fashion of ancient abbeys," invisible music was "laid on," and Lady Hamilton gave one of her "famous plastic performances."

But an orgy so disgusting brought its true reward. Extravagance, inattention to business and reality presently compelled Beckford to sell Fonthill and the greater part of its contents for 300,000 pounds to Mr. John Farquhar, a "self-made" man, who from the smallest beginnings had accumulated a huge fortune and was yet sufficiently stupid to buy this appalling bric-a-brac. The sale, according to Hazlitt, is, "the only proof of taste Mr. Beckford has shewn." The buyer had his reward. Less than three years after the purchase Wyatt's great octagonal tower, as we might suppose, fell down into the marble court and all was ruined indeed.

Beckford departed to Bath with the cream of his collection, and it must be reckoned to him for righteousness that though he sometimes sold a picture he never sold a book. The remnant of his vast palace remained to him, and in spite of further extravagances he was still in possession of 80,000 pounds when he died at Bath in 1844. He lies under the great tower on Lansdowne Hill.

It is delightful to record that almost nothing of Beckford's horrid "toy shop" remains at Fonthill; the sole relic of the "abbey" is a tower, one of the many he built, from which there is a fine view of the unsullied woods of Wardour and the open downs. In 1859 the Marquis of Westminster built a new Fonthill "Abbey" in the "Scotch baronial style," about half a mile from Beckford's ruin. As for Fonthill House it still retains a wing which was built by William Beckford the elder,

but nothing of the house built and pulled down down by his son. Only the gardens remain a delight for ever, and these, I suppose, are due in the first instance to the sentimental egotist who disliked the society of his fellow men and sequestered himself here with a physician, a major domo, and a French abbé. It is curious that according to Dr. Garnett "the few who gained admission to his presence found him a courteous and unassuming gentleman." Maybe his vulgarities were due largely to the age he lived in, from which they were perhaps ineffectual attempts to escape. No man of equal genius in England, unless it be Oscar Wilde, has had just his amazing limitations or been quite so sincerely insincere. One thing only we might regret, the church, "a classical building" which he built at Fonthill Giffard, which was replaced in 1866 by that "in the Early English style" we see.

From the inn at Fonthill Giffard it is about a mile and a half into the little ancient town of Tisbury, set on a low hill right on the Nadder itself. It is one of the oldest places in Wiltshire, and stands on a very ancient track which led at least from Ebbesborne Wake to Warminster quite through Tisbury where it crossed the Nadder. This way forms the present High Street of the little town, and in all its length was known of old as the Market Road. That Tisbury existed in the seventh century is known, for in those days there was a monastery here of which a certain Wintra was abbot in 674. This monastery seems to have disappeared—perhaps it was burnt by the Danes—and in 984 the village and church of Tisbury were granted by Ethelred to the Abbess of Shaftesbury. Not a Saxon stone is, however, left in Tisbury, the noble church we see, dedicated in honour of St. John Baptist, one of the larger buildings of South Wiltshire, dating at its earliest from the end of the twelfth century. This church in the Transitional Norman style, of which considerable fragments are to be seen in the present building, such as the lower stage of the central tower, the piers and arches into nave, chancel and transepts, much of both transepts and the doorway at the west end of the nave, probably consisted of a nave of the same length as that of the fifteenth century, which we now see. It would seem also to have had narrow aisles in place of those wide and noble alleys of the fourteenth century, a north porch much where that, also of the fourteenth century, stands to-day, a north and south transept with central tower

as we see, and a chancel of the same width as the old nave, though of what length we are not able to determine.[1] The whole church has indeed been altered and rebuilt at various times and the old fragments used again, so that it is often difficult to determine at what period certain parts of it were built.

The churchyard is large, and there to the north of the church stands one of the finest and oldest yews in the country, its trunk a hollow shell, 36 feet in circumference and perhaps 1,300 years old, and in that case the only relic of the Saxon monastery of which Wintra was abbot that has come down to us. On the other side of the path is the head of the old thirteenth century churchyard cross on a modern stem and not in its original position. Within, the church is of very noble effect. The tower, the oldest part remaining, is supported on four huge piers with detached shafts set on moulded bases and square plinths ; the capitals are curious, and seem to have been carved at a later period than the twelfth century. The arches are Transitional and pointed. That towards the chancel is double, having a later additional arch of the fourteenth century. The transepts are fundamentally of the same date as the lower stage of the tower. In the south transept in the south-east corner is a walled up aumbry with a piscina in a pointed arch close by. Here, too, is the entrance to the crypt, for the church has a crypt and an ancient one, though it is now filled up. Of old it is thought that this transept was the chapel of St. John the Evangelist.

The north transept is more interesting. This of old was the Lady Chapel, and the three-light Decorated window in the east wall has been partly blocked up in the central light in order to form a niche for a statue of the Blessed Virgin and Child over the altar. This was done, we may think, in the very end of the thirteenth century, when this transept was converted into the Lady Chapel. On either side of this window niches for figures still remain, but the design of each is different, and all are very late, not earlier than the end of the fifteenth century. I say this transept was converted into a chapel in honour of Our Lady at the end of the thirteenth century. At least we read that it was then "founded and endowed with the title of various tenements and fields now called 'Chantry,' 'Dover,' and 'Mockney.'" The chapel was later enclosed by a beautiful

[1] See *W.A.M.* xxxvi. 599 *et seq.* art. "Tisbury Church," by E. T. Whyte, F.S.A., a careful story of this fine church by an expert.

screen of open woodwork of the end of the fifteenth century only destroyed in our own day. The "squint" here in the north-east pier of the nave is modern; it served not the Catholic altar but the Protestant pulpit.

The chancel is largely modern. Of old the east window was a very large one, of probably seven lights—that we see here is not without beauty, and it is not difficult to believe that it was designed by Sir Christopher Wren, who was born at East Knoyle close by. The modern communion table would not call for notice, but that beneath it is the old stone Catholic altar marked with its five Decorated crosses. Here, too, is a piscina under a crocketed canopy.

The chancel was the burial place of many of the Arundels of Wardour. On an iron bracket here by the east window is an early seventeenth century helmet said to have belonged to the first Lord Arundel of Wardour who died in 1639, who lies here beside his daughter, Anne, wife of Cecil Calvert, "Lord Baltimore and Lord of Maryland in America" (1649). Here, too, is a fine brass to Lawrence Hyde of West Hatch, the great grandfather of Queen Mary (1689) and Queen Anne (1702). He is represented with his wife, her six sons and four daughters, and we read: "Here lyeth Laurence Hyde of West Hatch Esqr., who had issue by Anne his wife, six sons and four daughters and died in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord God 1590. Beati qui moriuntur in Domino." Against the walls is some beautiful linen-fold panelling of the early seventeenth century.

The clerestoried nave dates from the middle of the fifteenth century, it consists of four fine bays, and the waggon roof is of the same period, having winged angels bearing shields probably once emblazoned with emblems of the Passion. Between them is a series of shields with various coats. The font is a restored work of the thirteenth century with a fine pyramidal carved and re-painted cover of the seventeenth century swung from a bracket high on the wall by a chain on a wheel. The benches date from about 1600, as does the pulpit for the most part, but not the lectern, which is a copy.

The south aisle, which fundamentally dates from the early fourteenth century, is covered with a noble and beautiful ceiling richly moulded and carved and dating from 1616. It bears the following inscription: "EX DONO HENRICI MERVIN ARMIGERI, EDVARDO SCAMEL, HENRICO GERRARD, ECCLESIAE CUSTODIBUS ANO

DONI 1616. HOC OPUS COMPLETU EST." On the north we read: "EX DONO THOMAE ARUNDEL BARON." The bosses have many of them arms, among them those of the Abbey of Shaston. Below the monuments on the south wall are two brasses representing a man with a woman in early sixteenth century dress.

The north aisle is less splendid. Over the western half of it is a panelled ceiling dating from 1535, and inscribed: "JESU MARIA ANNO DOMINI MCCCCCXXXV. EDWARD SCAMMELL JOHN WEEKES." Another inscription dated 1569 appears also.



Tithe Barn, Place House, Tisbury.

Nothing much else remains in Tisbury itself, charming though it is, worth seeing; but eastward of the village stands Place Farm or Place House, formerly a Grange of the Abbess of Shaston, which should on no account be missed. It is in truth a fine farmhouse of the fifteenth century with its farm buildings almost perfect, and as a whole certainly without its equal in the county—indeed I know not where to look for its like. The buildings consist of a gateway having a large archway and side doorway facing the road, the lower part of which certainly is of the late thirteenth century; while the upper part, the room over the gate approached by an external stairway, is of the late fifteenth century. Within this gateway across a courtyard is

a second and smaller one which also has a room over it with an external stone stairway. Beyond this is the house which originally consisted of a great hall, with a small room off it and kitchen behind. Additions and divisions have altogether changed it within, but it is worth seeing, and the great fire-place of the kitchen still remains with its extremely beautiful chimney of the fifteenth century. Eastward lie the farm buildings, the cow house running north and south with a cart shed running due east to the south of it. To the north lie the stables and then across the yard thus enclosed by them, shutting it in on the east, stands the great barn running north and south, 188 feet long and 32 feet wide, consisting of no less than thirteen buttressed bays, two porches north and south, and four other doorways. The roof is thatched. Altogether we have here an unique range of medieval domestic buildings.

Tisbury is the best railway station from which to visit Wardour Castle, but on my wanderings in Wiltshire I considered the railway but little, and therefore left Wardour to be seen on my march along the Dorset border. I left Tisbury to go eastward along the stream crossing it at Panters and making for Sutton Mandeville on the hills above the southern meadows. It was not till I came through the tiny village of Chisgrove on the northern bank of the Nadder that I remembered that Sir John Davies, the poet, was born there in 1569, and seeing the flowers so gay in the wind of all the meadows recalled those lines of his from "Orchestra: a Poem of Dancing":

> "See how these flowers, that have sweet beauty too,
> The only jewels that the earth doth wear
> When the young sun in bravery her doth woo,
> As oft as they the whistling wind do hear,
> Do move their tender bodies here and there:
> And though their dance no perfect measure is
> Yet oftentimes their music makes them kiss.
>
> "Learn then to dance you that are princes born
> And lawful lords of earthly creatures all,
> Imitate them, and thereof take no scorn
> For this new art to them is natural,
> And imitate the stars celestiall;
> For when pale death your vital twist shall sever
> Your better parts must dance with them for ever."

Alas! poor poet: he married in 1609 Eleanor Touchet, daughter of Lord Audley, who was so crazy that she imagined

herself a prophetess, and brought him nothing but trouble and fines, and herself only imprisonment and ridicule.

Sutton Mandeville is a tiny village deliciously secluded from



Gatehouse, Place House, Tisbury.

every highway, and would be worth visiting for its own beauty quite apart from the interest of its church of All Saints, which though much restored still retains its Transitional Norman air, that the fifteenth century and our own modern brutalities have

been quite unable to dissipate. The fine yew in the churchyard surely saw the old wooden Saxon building give place to this church of stone in the end of the twelfth century just as it has witnessed every change since.

Fovant, near a little stream close by, lies under white poplars as dear a place again. The church of St. George lies in the shadow of three great elms in the churchyard. It, too, is a Transitional Norman building restored in 1863, but still boasting much of the old time, the priest's door on the north, the fifteenth century tower, the windows with their fine heads without, and within those lovely carved brackets which uphold still the roof of the south aisle. But the most interesting and touching thing here is the small fifteenth century brass which records the building of the tower in 1495. There we see a representation of the Annunciation and, beneath, the donor with "bedes" on his arm, perhaps the priest of the little sanctuary, cries out as we see "AVE GRATIA PLENA D.T. O Blessed Moder of pite pray to the Sone for me." Such was the exquisite work of medieval times; modern art is represented by the ghastly blue glass in the east window, a memorial to Lord Herbert of Lea.

Coming up out of Fovant on to the high road, and turning eastward towards Salisbury, one comes in about a mile to the village of Compton Chamberlayne, which also lies off the great road towards the Nadder between Compton Wood and Compton House.

Compton House, which has been in the hands of the Penruddockes for more than 300 years, deserves to be known to the English wayfarer as the home of a very gallant gentleman, that Colonel Penruddocke who when Oliver was Lord Protector lost his life in an unsuccessful attempt to raise the King's standard in Wiltshire. It seems that in the early morning of March 11, 1655, Colonel Penruddocke, together with Sir Joseph Wagstaff, Hugh Grove and others, more than 200 of them, rode in from Compton House to Sarum, and after seizing Oliver's High Sheriff and his Judges then holding an irregular assize, proclaimed Our Gracious Lord Charles II. of Great Britain, France and Ireland by the grace of God King, Defender of the Faith. The citizens of Salisbury remained unmoved, however, and after a time Colonel Penruddocke and his friends were compelled to retreat, even to South Molton in Devon, where a troop of Oliver's horse came up with them and arrested them. Colonel

Penruddocke was tried with his friends at Exeter, and was condemned to be beheaded, which sentence was presently carried out, though they offered to spend their lives in fighting "the too powerful and common enemy the Turk." Upon the scaffold Colonel Penruddocke exclaimed as he ascended to it: "This I hope will prove like Jacob's ladder, though the feet of it rest upon earth, yet I doubt not but the top of it reacheth to heaven. The crime for which I am now to die is Loyalty, in this age called High Treason."

The rising was altogether without seriousness, but it gave Cromwell the excuse he had wanted to place all England under martial law.

The Penruddockes had originally come from Cumberland in the sixteenth century. It was Sir Edward Penruddocke, M.P. in 1586 for Wilton, and Sheriff in 1598, who built Compton House which still remains in part of that time. It is said to contain several relics of the unhappy Colonel, together with his portrait.

The church of St. Michael which is close to the house is a cruciform building, dating for the most part from the middle of the fourteenth century.

Just above Compton Chamberlayne, on the steep downs to the south, stands Chiselbury Camp. It is a roughly circular affair having a single vallum and ditch with its entrance guarded by an earthwork on the south-east. The height of the vallum in places is as much as 11 feet. It is worth a visit. Many good arrow heads and scrapers have been found there. The view also is glorious, and because of it he is wise who goes on his way back to Sarum along the steep north escarpment of these downs by Compton Hut and so over the racecourse and Harnham Hill with its great view of the Cathedral, to Salisbury.

CHAPTER XII

THE VALLEY OF THE EBBLE

It was very early one May morning that I set out from Salisbury to explore the last of the five valleys of the Plain, the valley of the Ebble, or as it is often called in the greater part of its course the Vale of Chalk.

The Ebble or Ebele joins the Avon more than two miles below Salisbury at the village of Bodenham by Longford Castle, and it was thither I went to begin my march up this last valley of the Plain. After crossing the Ebble at Nunton, however, I did not follow it down to its junction with the Avon, but turned up the valley westward under Clearbury Ring,[1] in the full morning light, and in about a mile came to the village of Odstock, a charming place under the low downs beside the stream, with an interesting church dedicated in honour of the Blessed Virgin. The best feature of the church is the chancel, which is a fine Early English work with a good altar tomb supposed to be that of the founder under a canopy in the south wall. There we read in a partly destroyed French inscription "DIEU DE SA ALME MERCI." Who this "founder" may have been we do not know, but in the Domesday Survey Odstock was included among the lands of Odo, and was held by Bictric, whose father had held it in the time of King Edward. In the time of Richard I., however, Odstock appears to have been in the hands of the Gerberds, and it may be one of them whose tomb stands in the sanctuary unto this day. They at any rate were patrons of the living from 1209 to 1526, when the manor and advowson passed to the

[1] From Clearbury Ring you may see all across Hampshire and even the tower of Christchurch Priory on a fine day after rain. Clearbury stands 408 feet over the sea. It is not a very strong camp with a single ditch and vallum. The area is about five acres, rather more.

family of Webb, who held them till they sold to the Earl of Radnor in 1790. It is delightful to know that only two families held Odstock from the end of the twelfth to the end of the eighteenth century.

The Webbs evidently did a good deal for the church. Perhaps they built the formidable tower and placed there that bell which still remains inscribed: "X IN : HO : NO : RE : MA : RI : E." To them we may, I suppose, surely attribute the old oak pulpit dated 1550, with its queer couplet and loyal inscription:

> "God bless and save our Royal Queen,
> The lyke on earth was never seen,"

which is true however you take it. And something even yet remains of their manor house in the farmhouse close by with its four maples.

The next village in the vale is Homington, where the church has been rebuilt, but right above it two miles away in the downs, and quite on the Hampshire border, stands a wood called Great Yews, well worth a visit on account of the size and age of the trees. Close by is the boundary known as Grim's Ditch, a prehistoric earthwork.

From Great Yews one may come down into the beautiful village of Coombe Bissett in the Vale of Chalk.

The church of St. Michael here is of considerable interest. To begin with, Coombe Bissett stands but a mile from the Roman road from Old Sarum to Dorchester, where it fords the Ebble at Stratford Tony. It is possible then that there was a villa here in Roman days, and certainly tiles that look Roman may be seen in the thirteenth century wall on the north side of the chancel of the church. That a Saxon church probably of wood stood here seems certain, and when in the twelfth century a Transitional Norman church was begun here it would seem that the nave was first built, the Saxon chancel serving until in the thirteenth century an Early English chancel was erected. Of all this something is left. The two western bays of the nave remain from the twelfth century, as does the north side of the chancel with its fine lancet windows from the thirteenth; but the church for the most part was rebuilt in the fifteenth century, and apart from modern restoration that is what we now see. The thirteenth century font, a curious one, remains, as do the buttresses of the same period in the chancel. The thirteenth

century work here was probably due to the Bissett who named the place.

Stratford Tony, a mile higher up the valley on the northern bank of the stream, guards the ford by which the Roman road crossed the Ebble. It gets its name from the family of Toni, whose founder Ralf was standard bearer to the Conqueror at Hastings. The church is without interest, but it is perhaps



Priest's Door, Bishopstone Church.

significant that it is close to the ford and dedicated in honour of St. Laurence, as is that at Stratford sub-Castle.

Crossing the river here I came among a noble group of beeches to the church of St. John Baptist, Bishopstone. This is the first of the very noble buildings which distinguish this valley.

The church is cruciform under a central tower, and consists of nave and chancel of almost equal length and north and south transepts. Attached to the chancel on the north-east

is a contemporary sacristy, while upon the south side is a contemporary door with a porch. To the north of the nave is a porch which has been rebuilt, and is the chief entrance to the church, the west door being blocked up. Attached to the south end of the south transept is a curious building, the use and intention of which it is difficult to understand. In the nobler parts the work here, as in the chancel, much resembles that at Downton—indeed it would seem to be from the hand of the same builder, and it is without surprise we learn that Bishopstone is in the Hundred of Downton, and the patron of the two churches was the same till the Reformation, the Bishop of Winchester, whence Bishopstone probably gets its name.

The great period of building here at Bishopstone would seem to have been the latter half of the fourteenth century, when the Decorated style was passing into the Perpendicular. At that time the chancel and transepts of the church were rebuilt very slowly, more or less regularly from east to west, the old nave being rather restored than rebuilt in a feeble Perpendicular manner. Note, for instance, the roof and windows of the nave, and compare them with the lovely work in the chancel; note also the fact that the chancel, south transept and sacristy are faced with stone without, but the nave and north transept only with flints.

Nothing could well be lovelier than the work in the chancel and transepts; but even there we may note the progress of the builders in the windows: those in the chancel and in the sides of the transepts are magnificent Decorated work, altogether lovely; but in the north and south windows of the transept it is easy to see a change, while in the windows of the nave we have mere Perpendicular.

The finest parts of the church are indeed the chancel and the south transept with their fine stone vaulted ceilings. The chancel is especially noble. The ribs of the vaulting spring from corbels in the angles, and the carving on the boss over the sanctuary represents Our Lady with symbols of the four Evangelists. In the next bay the boss shows us the head of St. John Baptist, the patron of the church, and the last some exquisite foliage. The east window is a lovely one of four lights with a niche in each jamb, the wooden carvings being modern. On either side the altar is a canopied recess, that in the south being a piscina. Against the south wall are the sedilia with very ornate canopies

that do not succeed in pleasing us as well as we might expect. The two double windows on either wall are delightful, however, and what praise can be good enough for the priest's door with its exquisite exterior porch and its groined roof.

The south transept has two double windows both in the east and west wall, and one of three lights at the south end. The vaulted ceiling is in two bays similar to those of the chancel. Without against the southern wall is a curious low vaulted chamber of two bays, each having an open arch of some three feet in width and over five feet in height. It stands directly under the three-light window and is of the same period as the transept. What its use may have been I know not. Mr. Ponting considers that it may have been the tomb of the founder of the transept chapel.[1]

The north transept is less fine than the south, I think. The windows, however, are better, and there is a good niche between them in the east wall and a piscina there to the south of where the altar stood of old. The great thing here, however, is the lovely recessed tomb of the fourteenth century, probably that of the founder. The magnificent pinnacled arch spans the full width of the transept and is very elaborate and beautiful. Mr. Ponting suggests that its great width probably means that it covered a double tomb. Certainly two stone coffins of about 1340 stand within it to-day, each incised with a cross and one having also a shield with the letters I.A., and a star upon it.[2] Here, too, is a fine recessed tomb of the time of Elizabeth. In the south wall of the south transept is the elaborate tomb designed by Pugin of the restorer of the church, a former rector, the Rev. G. A. Montgomery, who was killed in 1842 by the fall of the unfinished vaulting of East Grafton Church. The elaborate and often beautiful woodwork in the chancel as well as the carvings of the pulpit were brought by him from Spain, it is said, and placed here. The church plate was presented by John Earle, the author of *Microcosmography*, who was rector here in 1639: it is said to have been made in Cologne. After the Restoration he was made dean of Westminster. Clarendon

[1] See Mr. Ponting's excellent article on the church in *W.A.M.* xxvi. 207.

[2] I.A., in my opinion, refers to John Alan or Alwyn, who held land at Knighton in 1322 (*see infra*) and in that year founded a chantry in the south transept of Broad Chalke church.

says that " he was among the few excellent men who never had and never could have an enemy." At Bishopstone he had succeeded William Chillingworth who had in 1630 sought refuge in the Catholic Church, but in 1634 had declared himself once more a Protestant.

Beyond Bishopstone the road runs on the north bank of the stream through the valley of Stoke Farthing and so into Broad Chalke, where is the second of the great churches which ennoble this valley.

Broad Chalke with the greater part of the hundred in which it stands was granted in the year 955 by the Saxon King Eadwic to the Abbess of the Benedictine convent at Wilton,[1] and in this grant was included the manor of Knighton. In the year 1322 some of the lands of Knighton were in the possession of John Alan or Alwyn, who, in that year, Mr. Hutchinson tells us, founded a chantry chapel in the south transept of Broad Chalke church which is still known as the Knighton aisle.

Then in the year 1447 the Abbess of Wilton granted the rectory of Broad Chalke, now a prebendaryship in Sarum Cathedral, to King Henry VI., and this was confirmed in 1466, the king having in 1448 made over the prebendaryship to King's College, Cambridge.

This outline of history will help us to understand the church. Probably a church has stood here from time immemorial under the invocation of All Saints ; but the building we see dates at its earliest from the latter part of the thirteenth century. That thirteenth century church when it was complete consisted of a nave with aisles, north and south transepts, chancel and central tower ; of this only the chancel and the north transept remain.

The rest of the church was rebuilt in the fifteenth century, that is to say in all probability at the time when the Abbess of Wilton granted it to the King and he gave it to his new College in Cambridge.

One turns first to what is left of the earlier building, that is to say, the chancel and the north transept. The chancel has three lancets in both side walls, but the east window and the roof are modern. On the south is a priest's door, and a fine double sedilia with rich mouldings and finely carved terminals.

The north transept, perhaps the least changed part of the

[1] See Rev. T. N. Hutchinson, *A Sketch of the History of Broad Chalke*, in *W.A.M.* xxvi. 213.

church, has kept even its trussed-rafter roof. In the east wall are two lancet windows, and in the north end wall a fine three light window with good tracery of the period. The aumbry in the east wall is also fine.

Turning now to the body of the church we see how greatly it was changed in the rebuilding of the fifteenth century. The aisles are gone, the whole nave having been rebuilt without arcades, but with very thick walls to bear the thrust and weight of the great roof which covers all. From outside this rebuilding is obvious in the west front which was not wholly destroyed but merely widened, the five light west window being inserted. The porch was built at the same time. It holds a stoup and over the door there is a niche and a window of two lights. Even the old oak door remains.

The roof of the nave is not that of the fifteenth century but a copy made in 1847. The old one must have been magnificent, and was, of course, coloured. Happily the old stone roof corbels remain; they are beautiful and represent angels playing musical instruments or smiling or singing. Mr. Hutchinson records that there was also a large St. Christopher painted on the north wall of the nave and another painting of our Lord bearing His Cross over the western arch of the central tower. The tower is borne on four moulded arches, and the lower stage is vaulted in stone, the ribs springing from corbels as finely carved as those of the nave; but the upper stage is feeble. Of the six bells which remain one is of pre-Reformation date. It bears the initials P.W., said to be the signature of Peter de Weston, the fourteenth century London bell founder, and the inscription:

"ANDRIAE CAMPANA FUGIANT PULSANTE PROFANA."

The south transept has a very late window of five lights in the south end wall, but it is by chance beautiful. That window is not earlier than the end of the fifteenth century; but the work in the nave and lower part of the tower is perhaps rather the work of the last prebendary appointed by the abbess of Wilton in 1417 than of the first appointed by King's College, Cambridge, in 1453. At any rate Aubrey, who lived here for a time, says that in his time there was a tradition "that the church was built by a lawyer, whose picture is in several of the windows yet remaining, kneeling in a purple gowne or robe, and at the bottome of the windowes this subscription: ORATE PRO FELICI STATU MAGISTRI

RICARDI LEUOT." In 1417, as Mr. Hutchinson reminds us, the abbess appointed Richard Leyot to the prebendaryship. Perhaps it was he who built the church.

Broad Chalke has been the home of more than one man of note. John Aubrey the Antiquary lived here, as I have said, Rowland Williams the Theologian was an incumbent of the church, and Mr. Maurice Hewlett for long made his home at Old Rectory ; but the place has only produced one man so far as I know of any fame, and he was rather infamous than famous, I mean John Bekinson, who flattered Henry VIII. for money, but repented later and confessed his sins. He was too the friend of John Leland, who thought well of him, so we must not judge him too harshly. But the renegade who could write a treatise *De supremo et absoluto Regis imperio* and dedicate it to Henry VIII. is no friend of ours or worthy to dwell in this valley.

From Broad Chalke the road runs still on the north bank of the Ebble to Fifield Bavant, and then crossing the stream just before it enters the village comes into Ebbesborne Wake.

At Fifield Bavant I was very anxious to see the church for I had heard it was the smallest in the kingdom, and I was in some small anxiety for the fame of Culbone in Somerset. I need not have been afraid, the church here at Fifield is not a complete church at all but a mere chapel. It has no division to mark sanctuary from the nave even, and neither aisle nor porch. Now Culbone church is complete in every way, consisting of nave, chancel and south porch. But even though we stretch a point in favour of Fifield Bavant and agree to ignore the fact that it was a chapel and not a church, even so it cannot claim to be the smallest church in England, for it is 35 feet long and 14 feet wide, whereas Culbone is but 33 feet long and 12 feet 8 inches wide.[1] I am sorry for Fifield and for Wiltshire, but so it is. The only thing that Fifield church can boast of is its font, which any well disposed person will accept as Saxon, if only because that at Culbone is undoubtedly Norman. It boasts a noble patron, St. George ; but after all what is St. George to St. Dubricius, at least as a patron ? The one has all the English, and very hard-mouthed heretics they are, to consider, whereas St. Dubricius has his leisure to brood by the Severn sea, and then if St. Dubricius sleeps, there is always—St. Culbone.

Considering thus I came into Ebbesborne Wake, which gets

[1] See my *Highways and Byways of Somerset* (Macmillan, 1913), p. 356.

its name not so much from a saint as from a deity, the deity or genius of this valley, for at first it was named Ebelesborne, till in the time of King John it was granted by the King to Jeffrey de Wak, who gave it his surname. Then in the time of Edward III. the Bodenhams came in, and it is, I suppose, their arms we see in the fine tower of the too much restored church of St. John Baptist. At any rate they held the manor for a long time, the last heir male of the family being commemorated in a



Alvediston, Ebble Valley.

mural tablet in the north side of the chancel dated 1743. Under this is a very ancient looking tomb with no date or other inscription than these verses in old English letters :

As thou dost lyve, O reader dere,
So dyd I once which now lye beare :
And as I am so shalt thou be
For all is frayle as thou mayst see.

The church can never have been very interesting, I imagine, but it boasts a pre-Reformation chapel of about 1517.

Ebbesborne Wake lies in a cup of the chalk downs half hidden from sight. The valley narrows there but presently opens a little about the village of Alvediston on the other side of the stream off the high road, on the flank of White Sheet Hill.

Alvediston, charming in itself, a little lonely place half lost and wholly unafraid in the midst of the downs, is interesting, not for its church, which is an old but not very fine cruciform building with a western tower, but for the tomb to be found in the south transept, an altar tomb of the fourteenth century on which lies an effigy in full plate armour like that of the " torpedo man " in Sarum Cathedral. This tomb is that of a member of one of the oldest families in England, the Gawens, or, as we might say, remembering the *Morte d'Arthur*, Gawaines. They lived at Norrington. The old manor house which they built or rebuilt in the time of Richard II. of which certain parts, the hall and porch, still remain almost perfect and the old gardens, terraces and walks may still be traced, stands to-day.

When the Gawens first came to this place, though we know them to have been in possession in the time of Richard II., where they came from, and, apart from the traditional antiquity of their family, who they were, I cannot say. Aubrey tells us in his *Miscellanies* that " the Gawens had long been settled in this place ; they had resided here 450 and odd years, until it was disposed of to Sir William Wyndham (in 1658) at which time was also sold their estate at Broad Chalke which they had possessed as long, perhaps longer." He goes on to say that the family was a very old one, and suggests that they were descended from " that Gawain with his old courtesie " of whom Chaucer speaks and with whose doings so many of the pages of the *Morte d'Arthur* are eloquent and lovely.

It will be remembered that Sir Gawaine was King Arthur's sister's son, and that he had many brave adventures in the *Morte d'Arthur*, undertook the quest of the Sangreal, and at last fought with Sir Launcelot, was wounded and died. We learn, though not from Malory, that his shield was " of bright gules with the pentangle painted thereon in gleaming gold . . . and it was well suiting to the knight and to his arms since Gawain was faithful in five and five-fold, for pure was he as gold, void of all villainy, and endowed with all virtues. Therefore he bare the pentangle on shield and surcoat as truest of heroes and gentlest of knights." It is said also that in the year 1082 in a



Norrington Manor House.

province of Wales called Rose was his sepulchre found. However that may be, it is interesting to note that the Gawen arms were Ermine a saltire engrailed Azure charged with five *fleur de lys Or*. Now what is the fleur de lys but the pentangle? Moreover there were five of them and they were of gold. Do we not read of Sir Gawaine that "all his trust upon earth was in the Five Wounds that Christ bare on the Cross as the Creed tells, and wherever this knight found himself in stress of battle he deemed well that he drew his strength from the Five Joys which the Queen of Heaven had of her Child"? Of course, we know that the experts assert that no man bore a coat before the twelfth century; but we remind ourselves that long and long ago the Phrygians had a sow, the Thracians Mars, the Romans an eagle, the Goths a bear, the Flemings a bull, the Saxons a horse, as Wiltshire still testifies. As an art it may be that Heraldry did not flourish before Frederick Barbarossa. Perhaps it was then that Gawain's pentangle became the fleur de lys of the Gawens his descendants, and that five of them were so placed in the field in honour of these Five Wounds, which Sir Gawain held in such regard.

The sun was already low upon the downs when I left Alvediston and made my way up out of the Vale of Chalk to Berwick St. John, where I intended to sleep. In this little lonely place one is utterly alone with the great rolling hills; the present is lost in an illimitable past, and those mail-clad Knights Templars, Sir Robert Lucie and Sir John de Hussey, who lie respectively in the north and south transept of the little cruciform church of the thirteenth century, seem as much at home here as the village children and the old men about the hospitable doorway of the inn. The bell rings in the low Perpendicular tower, and one reminds oneself that it is ringing for all who like oneself are wanderers upon these downs, and that so it has rung not only for near two hundred years as it still does in winter time "to guide travellers over the downs" to this friendly shelter, but for near two thousand years to remind one, in the evening of the day, of the message of an angel. When the Rev. John Gane left his bequest in 1735 for the ringing of the great bell he was but confirming the custom of all the Christian centuries, a custom that of all those which are performed to-day in that church would alone have been recognised and welcomed not only by those Templar Knights, but by that Sir Willoughby de Broke, whose

arms are set in the roof of the sanctuary and who was rector here in 1485. Man changes but in accidentals and over the fashioned tombs of our Middle Age the Saxon dead in their cemetery on Winklebury also recognised and saluted that signal as did they who dwelt in the Romano-British village beyond White Sheet. We are all one, dead and living, in Berwick under the stars.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DORSET BORDER AND CRANBOURNE CHASE

Up above Berwick St. John beyond Winklebury Camp and sloping southward lies all the splendour and the greenwood of Cranbourne Chase, or rather of that fragment of it which still bears that famous name.

Winklebury, the corner camp, occupying as we see a promontory of the downs thrust out northward and west has an area of over twelve acres, is three-quarters of a mile in circumference and is guarded by a rough ditch ; an outer and an inner ward with a rampart whose great height reaches nearly 40 feet across the isthmus of the downs. It was, like so many of the earthworks in this neighbourhood, excavated by General Pitt-Rivers in 1881, and was considered by him to be of Late Celtic date. He may have been right, but to the south of the camp he discovered a Saxon cemetery containing 30 separate graves. Winklebury is but one, though I suppose the chief, of innumerable earthworks, barrows and villages that litter the downs here, a great number of which Pitt-Rivers examined.

Such things have, I suspect, very little practical interest for the wayfarer. He likes to think of them and their mysterious witness to the age of our country and of the long line of our ancestors, but their flints, celts and knives and hammer stones, their iron knives, and glass beads, their copper coins, their Romano-British pottery, their cinerary urns and bronze razors, spearheads and bracelets have little meaning for him, beyond the fact of their evidence to the immemorial life of our island, and especially of Southern England. Cranbourne Chase, however, is another matter.

The county of Wiltshire was, I often think, more than any other English county surrounded and barred in with the Forests,

vast tracts of wild country, that is to say, containing villages and even towns, and certainly innumerable farms and steadings, but all under the Forest Law, and all in so far as hunting rights were concerned in possession of the Crown. To begin with the eastern side of the county—there was the great forest of Clarendon which was joined or nearly so on the north-west by Groveley, and upon the south by the New Forest, which in its turn upon its western borders was met by Cranbourne, a forest too in early days or ever it passed out of the king's hands and became a chase. Cranbourne itself upon the north and west was met by Selwood Forest, and that again by the Forests of Melksham and Pewsham which in their turn were met in the north of the county by the Forest of Braden, and that on the east ran into Savernake and that into Chute, which had the Forest of Harewood between it and Clarendon. Of all these Forests not one was more famous than Cranbourne.

Cranbourne gets its name from the old Castle in Dorset which stood over the little town of that name, and is now represented by a manor house for the most part of the time of Henry VIII., belonging to the Marquis of Salisbury, who is also Viscount Cranbourne. This castle was within the Honour of Gloucester, which included a large part of Gloucestershire as well as great lands in Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire. From very early times this Honour belonged to the Crown, and, of course, as long as that was so Cranbourne was a Forest, that is to say, it was administered under the Forest Law, and the right of hunting therein exclusively belonged to the Crown. At first the forest would seem to have consisted of a comparatively small tract of country wholly in the county of Dorset between Woodyates and Melbury. Gradually the Forest was enlarged but William Rufus having given the Honour of Gloucester to his nephew Fitz Hamon, the Forest became a Chase as it ever after remained, though it came to King John with his wife, Hawisa Countess of Gloucester. It is at this time we learn the extent of the Chase, which included a considerable part of South Wiltshire and Dorset. It stretched from Salisbury on the east, some part of which city it included, to Shaftesbury in the west, and from Wilton in the north to Christchurch in the south, roughly, that is to say, 25 miles by 20. King John divorced Hawisa of Gloucester to marry Isabelle of Angoulême. Hawisa married Geoffrey de Maundeville, who thus came into

possession of Cranbourne Chase, but on his wife's death all passed to her nephew Gilbert de Clare. All this time the forest rights over so great a tract of country had been questioned by the various landowners and tenants within its confines. Among the chief of these was the Abbess of Wilton, who bitterly protested not only against the hunting rights claimed in her lands in the Nadder Valley, but especially against the demand of a toll or *cheminage* at Old Harnham Bridge. This toll, Canon Jackson tells us, [1] "was levied upon every person using the road through the Chase during one particular month only—called the fence month—the fawning season, during which travellers were supposed to be likely to disturb the does. This toll, an undeniable mark of forest tyranny, continued to the very last, and possibly there may be some veteran still alive (1885) . . . who may remember that upon old Harnham Bridge a stag's head, or pair of horns used to be set up every year fifteen days before and fifteen days after Midsummer Day as a notice to pay *cheminage*. Four pence for every waggon and one penny for every pack-horse; and the money was collected by virtue of a warrant from the steward of the Chase." The abbess protested in vain, the Clares got their rights confirmed, and when the last of that family fell at Bannockburn in 1313, a woman again inherited till all came back into the hands of Edward IV. There Cranbourne Chase or Forest remained until James I. in 1612 granted it to Robert Cecil Earl of Salisbury. The new owner at once attempted to reassert the full rights of the Chase, which in the King's hands had fallen largely into desuetude. The abbess was gone, but Lord Arundell of Wardour denied the Earl's rights over Tollard Royal, and the Gawens of Norrington also stood out. The whole Chase was then divided into eight "Walks," called Rushmore, Staplefoot, Cobley, Bursey-stool, West Walk, Fernditch, Alderholt and Chettered; over all the Earl claimed hunting rights, and especially the right to take, to follow and to kill exclusively all the deer which were reckoned in the whole Chase to amount to about two thousand.[2] The Earls of Salisbury soon grew tired of the trouble they had to enforce their rights. They presently sold the Fernditch Walk to the Earl of Shaftesbury, who was much less eager to claim everything, but in 1714 his property here came to George

[1] In his excellent paper on Cranbourne Chase, *W.A.M.* xxii. 152.

[2] In 1828, "probably by a legal fiction," they were reckoned at 20,000.

Pitt, later Baron Rivers, and he at once attempted to enforce all the obsolete laws of the Chase.

It was now that the whole countryside rose in rebellion. Unlawful deer killing, poaching on a great scale, came to be the fashion, not only with the peasants and poorer folk but among the gentry, who, in order to assert their supposed rights, used to assemble in parties to enforce them. These deer hunters, as they were called, hunted in a special dress which consisted of "a kind of helmet in shape and material not unlike a beehive. It was made of wreaths of straw or wire and well padded within. The body armour of the deer hunting gentlemen was made of the strongest canvas well quilted with wool to lessen the effect of heavy blows. They wore also a short sword, a hanger, and carried a quarter staff."

Of the most famous leader of one group of deer hunters, Mr. Henry Good, whose family had long been settled at Bower Chalke, we have the following account from Mr. Chafin, who knew him. "He was well versed in history, never forgot anything, had a taste for poetry, was particularly fond of Milton and—*Hudibras*. He was skilled in the science of music and a good performer on various instruments. He was a constant visitor at Lord Windsor's at Moyle's Court in Hampshire, where his company was much appreciated, not so much for his accomplishments just mentioned as for his great skill in all the sports of the field. . . . Mr. Good was much respected by the clergy and the principal inhabitants of the parishes near, many of whom had a talent for music and were devoted to it. They established a musical club at a little Inn called the Hut, situate in Salisbury South Plain on a little eminence which gave a commanding prospect of the Chase. . . . On a certain Sunday after his religious duties had been performed in the month of August, on a very hot day, he took his customary excursion to the Hut; and while he was standing at the door with his host for the benefit of the air, and admiring the beautiful prospect, a more interesting one arrested his attention, for he spied a herd of fat bucks leave a large wood where they had been much exposed to the sun and annoyed by flies and enter a small detached cover for shade. After a very short conversation therefore with the host who had not seen the deer, but perhaps was gazing at the rocks of the Isle of Wight, he wished him good morning and made a circuit to the place where the deer entered

and near which he judged that they were then lodged. With great caution and profound silence he drew out his nooses from his musical papers and set them with great dexterity, at every pathway within the border of the wood. He then filled his pockets with pebbles, and went quietly round to the opposite side when he began the operation of throwing the pebbles, jerking one at a time into the wood at a short distance to stir the deer without much alarming them, and by making approaches to them in this manner to keep them in motion that whilst they were attending to the falling of the pebbles they might heedlessly run their heads into the nooses in which when he came to examine he found that he had been successful, and had got three of the finest deer suspended by their necks, whose throats he immediately cut. Knowing that there was an old saw pit in the wood full of leaves he dragged them thither, and having paunched them concealed the bodies in the pit and covered them with leaves. He then mounted an oak tree which commanded a view of the whole Walk, took his *Hudibras* out of his pocket and amused himself by reading it until nightfall; when, perceiving the coast clear he betook himself in a byway to his own habitation, and having made his success known to his confederates, a small party of them went with him with a cart and brought home their booty without interruption or even suspicion. The two bands, the hunters and the musicians, had fine feasting, for it was a leading and strict rule that no plunder of this kind was ever sold, unless to pay the penalty if they were detected."

Such was the custom among the gentry—the poorer folk were not behindhand, but their methods were less artistic. In 1738, a keeper of West Walk was murdered; in 1780 a regular battle between keepers and poachers was fought, and another famous encounter took place in 1791, when the culprits were transported for life.

All this was not done without reason. Lord Rivers was behaving in a most truculent and high handed manner, was throwing down fences, ordering farmers not to plough up downland and prosecuting those who refused to obey him. Then he invaded the park of Wardour with his hounds, and at last shot one of the greyhounds belonging to Mr. King of Norrington Farm. This brought the matter to a head, and put in question the whole claim of Lord Rivers. Was Nor-

rington within the Chase or not, if not, what were the bounds of the full forest rights? The case was tried in Salisbury in 1816, and Lord Rivers was only able to establish his rights over the small bounds of the original forest, but he was able to maintain his right of "running through" the larger track of country. On the whole Mr. King won his case, to the great joy of the Wiltshire people. With a commendable common sense the Rivers family, like the true English folks they were, consented to compromise, and in 1828 by Act of Parliament the Chase was disfranchised, Lord Rivers receiving in compensation £1,800 a year with the right to dispose of all the deer and to retain the lodges of Rushmore, West Lodge and Bursey-stool.

There can be no doubt that these forest rights had become a scandal, were demoralising the whole country side and had to be rescinded. To-day happily nothing is left of them, and Cranbourne Chase as a deer hunting country is a thing of the past. It remains, however, a wild and leafy labyrinth, a paradise of woodland and wild country of copses of hollies, thorns and hazels over which rise the downs capped with many a hat of trees. Every here and there one finds great ploughlands, portions of the old forest which have been cleared and brought under cultivation, but there is still enough of woodland and wild left to wander in and to rejoice the eyes of us all.

Upon the south of Cranbourne Chase, a little to the west and quite on the Dorset border, indeed just across it, is the Romano-British village of Woodcuts, which was excavated by General Pitt-Rivers in 1884–5, and has produced a very large number of relics which are to be seen in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Farnham. A similar village may be seen at Rotherley, a mile and a quarter north-west from Woodcuts. Both villages were occupied by the Britons, not by their Roman masters, and consist as we see them of pits often as much as 10 feet in diameter and 9 feet deep. Ninety-five of these have been found at Woodcuts, and ninety-two at Rotherley. Woodcuts was surrounded by an entrenchment and a ditch, and the huts were built of daub and wattles. The pits were used for the interment of the dead. The inhabitants would seem to have been smaller than the present Wiltshire folk, averaging for the males but 5 ft. 4¾ ins., and judging by the finds would seem to have led a peaceful agricultural life of a very humble sort, though that they were not without their refinements is proved by the

discovery of some red Samian pottery of finest quality and some rare glazed Roman ware. They also ate oysters, surely a luxury so far from the sea.

To the west of Woodcuts stands Tollard Royal, which got its name of Royal because King John when Earl of Gloucester in right of his wife held a knight's fee here. He spent very much of his time in these forests between 1200 and 1213, and the house he is said to have occupied here which still bears his name may still be seen. King John's House was occupied by a farmer till 1889, when General Pitt-Rivers decided to examine the traditions of its great antiquity, and especially to remove certain additions made to it in 1828 by Lord Rivers ; he also proposed to excavate about the house. The rooms on the north-east were obviously of late Tudor construction, but part of the thirteenth century house was found to remain, its walls four feet thick, a window of the same date had been built up, a large window and door had been added in Elizabethan times and a porch later still. Another thirteenth century window was discovered on the south-east and another altered in Elizabethan times was on the south-west with an aumbry close to it where it is thought the king kept his valuables. The staircase was a fine Elizabethan work, but at the top of it was a thirteenth century archway. The Elizabethan room on the right there now contains the relics found in and about the house. On the first floor in the King's Chamber two thirteenth century windows with seats were found, one having been totally built up and the other transformed by Elizabethan workmen. On the north-east of the room was too originally a thirteenth century window ; it leads to two rooms of Elizabethan date. The house is furnished in accordance with its age, and the walls hung with a series of pictures to illustrate in a small way the history of painting.

The Larmer grounds close by, beautiful pleasure gardens, take their name from the Larmer Tree beneath which, it is said, King John used to meet his huntsmen. The tree was originally a wych elm and a fragment of the rind was still standing till it was blown down in the winter of 1894. An oak was then planted in its place. It seems certain that it was under the elm the chase courts used to be held, the point at which they assembled marked by the Larmer boundary tree being not only the boundary of Wiltshire and Dorset, but the junction of three parishes—Tollard Royal, Tollard Farnham and Farnham.

Tollard Royal church, dedicated in honour of St. Peter *ad Vincula*, is a not very remarkable building, but it contains a very interesting effigy of Sir William Payne (d. 1388) which is one of the few specimens of banded mail known to us. In a niche in the south wall is a black marble sarcophagus containing the ashes of the later General Pitt-Rivers. The east window in the north aisle commemorates a lady who was married in this church and killed by lightning on her honeymoon in Switzerland. Close by is the wooden cross the Swiss peasants placed over her grave, it was brought home from the Alps when it was replaced by a cross of marble.

On the way back to Berwick St. John one passes Rushmore Lodge, the chief "Lodge" of Cranbourne Chase when it was divided into six Walks.

I slept again at Berwick and the next morning set out south and west across the high vale, round White Sheet Hill for Donhead St. Mary and St. Andrew.

The Donhead get their name from the Don, which is the head waters of the Nadder and once, I think, popularly at any rate, named the whole stream. The two villages lie one high up over the northern bank, the other low down beside the little river and further east.

Donhead St. Mary or Over Donhead boasts to-day the finer church of the two. It consists of chancel with two side chapels, clerestoried nave with aisles, south porch and western tower. The two side chapels of the chancel each have a western archway into the aisles of the nave, and these would seem to be the earliest features of the church save the font, which also dates from the twelfth century. The south arcade of the nave is of the early thirteenth century, the north is later and seems to date about 1260. The side chapels and the porch and perhaps the tower-arch are of the middle of the fourteenth century, while the tower itself, the chancel, and the aisles are very late fifteenth century work. The finest part of the church is the nave, the clerestory windows being especially lovely. The communion table is curious, and no doubt dates from the seventeenth century. It is really a "telescope table," that is to say, its top may be drawn out to three times its apparent length. Of old no doubt the whole was borne into the midst of the church, and there set east and west, the congregation seating themselves about it for the celebration of "the Lord's Supper." Within

the church is the tomb of Anthelm Guillemot, a monk of the convent of Bourbon in Normandy, who died here at Donhead, a hundred years ago. This stone throws some light on the old farm house near the spring in the Manor of Combe in the parish known as "the Priory." This was never an English religious house, but certain monks of the Carthusian order were given refuge here by Lord Arundell of Wardour during the French Revolution.

Within the parish also is the house Bell-Knapp, now called Donhead Hall, which was built by Godfrey Huckle, who assumed his mother's name of Kneller, and was the grandson of the painter, Sir Godfrey Kneller.

Above Donhead St. Mary, more than 700 feet up in the downs, is the earthwork known as Castle Rings, a very strong affair, having four entrances, a single ditch and within an area of nearly twelve acres. A considerable number of bronze instruments have been found here.

Donhead St. Andrew, or Nether Donhead, is less interesting. It, too, belonged to St. Edward of Shaston, and here the Abbess had her Grange, which is now known as Bury Court and stands half in the parish of St. Mary and half in this of St. Andrew. The church, which has been too much restored, no longer agrees with Hoare's description of it. We look in vain for the chantry chapel, whose site is probably occupied by the present vestry. However, in the east window there remains a fragment of old glass blazoned with the arms of St. Edward of Shaston: azure, a cross fleury between four martlets Or. And there also remains a sculptured capital bearing the emblems of the Passion, and supported by angels resting on a shaft terminating in the head of our Lord. The church seems for the most part to be of the fourteenth century.

From Donhead St. Andrew I made my way westward by the high road south of the stream for some two miles, and then turned off on my left to find the little church of Ansty close to the ruins of the old Castle of Wardour. This little church would not be worth a visit but for the fact that it contains the seventeenth century bench ends, of very fine workmanship, which Wyatt threw out of Salisbury Cathedral. The altar table also is a fine Jacobean work. Behind the churchyard are some old buildings once a preceptory of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem.



Wardour Castle.

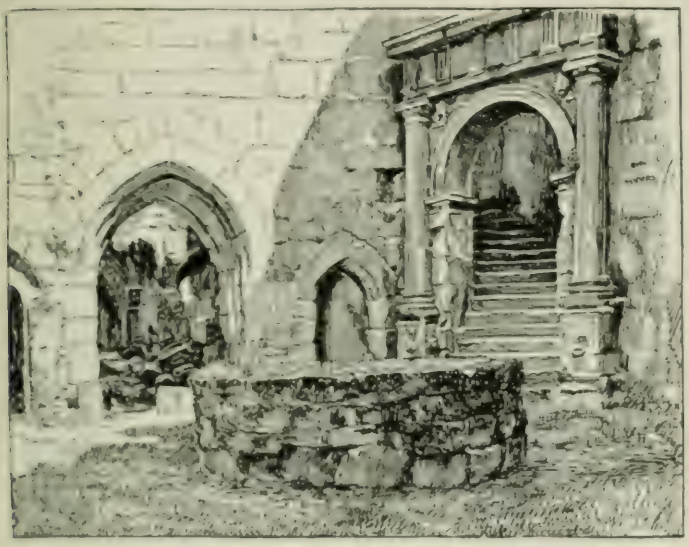
Nothing could be more lovely than the country about Ansty, the delicious hills covered with woods, the fair valley northward

and the magnificent park of Wardour which lies between them.

The manor of Wardour at the Domesday Survey was held by that Waleran *venator* whose successor's tomb we have thought to find at Steeple Langford. In the time of Henry II. it passed to the St. Martins and from them to the Lovells, who, in 1392, Richard II. being king, were granted a licence to fortify their house at Wardour. They lost the place in the Wars of the Roses, and after passing through various hands the Castle and manor were sold in the sixteenth century to Sir John Arundell of Lanherne in Cornwall of the Catholic branch of the family, who gave it as a wedding gift to his son Sir Thomas Arundell, who had married the sister of Queen Catherine Howard. Sir Thomas had been knighted at the marriage of Anne Boleyn in 1533, and was appointed as a commissioner for the suppression of religious houses, but he was soon under suspicion of being in favour of the " old religion," and was committed to the Tower, released and committed again in 1551, and in the following year executed as a rebel and a traitor. He, of course, thus lost his lands, but Queen Mary restored them to his son Matthew, whom Elizabeth knighted in 1574. Sir Matthew did not distinguish himself, but his son Sir Thomas was made a Count of the Holy Roman Empire, a title the family still possesses, for his valour in the wars against the Turks in Hungary. On one occasion he captured an infidel banner with his own hands whilst forcing the water tower at Esztergom. He was a great favourite of Elizabeth's, and James I. made him first Baron Arundell of Wardour. His son was with the Cornish Royalists at the battle of Lansdowne according to Clarendon, but this is not borne out by his epitaph in Tisbury Church. It was his second wife, Blanche, a grand-daughter of Margaret, Countess of Salisbury, who heroically defended Wardour Castle in 1643 against a strong force of rebels under Sir Edward Hungerford. This brave and beautiful lady had but fifty men in all to aid her, of which but half were soldiers, yet the women loading the muskets, she was able to withstand not fewer than 1,300 fighting men, and a bombardment which lasted for five days. She surrendered at last, upon May 8, upon honourable terms, but the rebels, as we might expect, violated their engagements, plundered the Castle and ruined the Park. The Castle was then garrisoned by the Parliament and placed under the command of Colonel

Ludlow, who held it till March, 1644, when young Lord Arundell, whose father had died of his wounds, and Sir Francis Didington, after a long siege, compelled Ludlow to surrender.

The ruins of this much battered Castle remain, the shell almost perfect with the high walls and tall windows, a notable specimen of late fourteenth and early fifteenth century work. The plan is hexagonal about an open court with two towers at



Courtyard, Wardour Castle.

the eastern entrance, approached by a noble terrace walk. Over the gateway is a niche with a head of our Lord, and the inscription: "SUB NOMINE TUO STET GENUS ET DOMUS." Beneath is a long inscription concerning Sir Thomas Arundell and his son Matthew. The grand staircase under a fine arch and vaulting also remains. Nothing could be lovelier or more English than this heroic ruin amid the woods and delicious gardens and lawns set with cypress and cedar, and a clustering iron-wood tree against the hills and over the meadowed valley.

The new Castle lies to the west. It is a building of the eighteenth century, and famous much more for its magnificent art treasures, pictures by Rembrandt, Titian, Velasquez, Holbein, Vandyck, Reynolds, and other masters, among them a copy by Angelica Kauffmann of a portrait of the brave and beautiful Lady Blanche, than for its own beauties. The chapel is in the right wing, and there is the splendid Westminster chasuble, a piece of English embroidery with the badges of Henry VIII. and Katherine of Aragon. On the south side of the altar is the monument of the second Lord Arundell and his wife Blanche. A loving cup, said to have been made from the wood of the Glastonbury Thorn and carved round the bowl with the Twelve Apostles in relief, is also preserved at Wardour.

From Wardour I went on over the Sem, one of the head waters of the Nadder, to East Knoyle, the birthplace of Sir Christopher Wren, who was born there, the son of the rector, in 1631 or 1632. It is perhaps impossible to be certain of the date, for not only were two sons named Christopher born, one in 1629 and the other in 1632, to Dr. Wren of East Knoyle, but the baptismal entry of the second, October 26, 1631, seems to be inaccurate by a year. On the translation of his brother, Matthew Wren, from the See of Norwich to Ely, who then resigned the deanery of Windsor, Dr. Wren was appointed to the latter dignity, but continued to hold the rectory of East Knoyle as well as that of Great Haseley in Oxfordshire. He was a convinced Royalist, and when the Great Rebellion broke out left Knoyle for Windsor. Meantime young Christopher went to Oxford, and at the age of twenty-four was Fellow of All Souls' and Professor of Astronomy at Gresham College, London. Evelyn recognised him as a kind of universal genius in every branch of learning save architecture almost. However, in 1662, the King having got back his own, appointed him Assistant to the Surveyor-General, especially that he might carry out the important work of restoring Old St. Paul's and Windsor Castle. Old St. Paul's, as we know, was destroyed by fire in 1666, and thereupon Wren was employed, not only to build a new cathedral, but to re-establish the City of London, and to restore and rebuild its churches to our great gain and glory.

Unfortunately the old rectory house in which Sir Christopher was born was pulled down in 1880, but the church, very finely situated, remains, a cruciform building for the most part of the

thirteenth century with Perpendicular additions including a western tower. All has been much restored, as has Knoyle House, which, however, is said never to have had much architectural merit.

On the hills to the north-west of East Knoyle stands "Clouds," the house which the late Percy Wyndham began in 1880. It was burnt down in 1889, but rebuilt in 1893, and there one of the men I like to think most typical of England lived till his death in 1911. His son, George Wyndham, was one of the best loved men of his day, his kindness, his wise and great helpfulness and sympathy, his courtesy and nobility of character endearing him to everyone who knew him.[1] He was a true Englishman and one whom England could ill spare.

[1] See the beautifully written memoir written by Charles Boyd (A. L. Humphreys, 1913).



Mere Church.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SOMERSET BORDER FROM MERE TO WARMINSTER

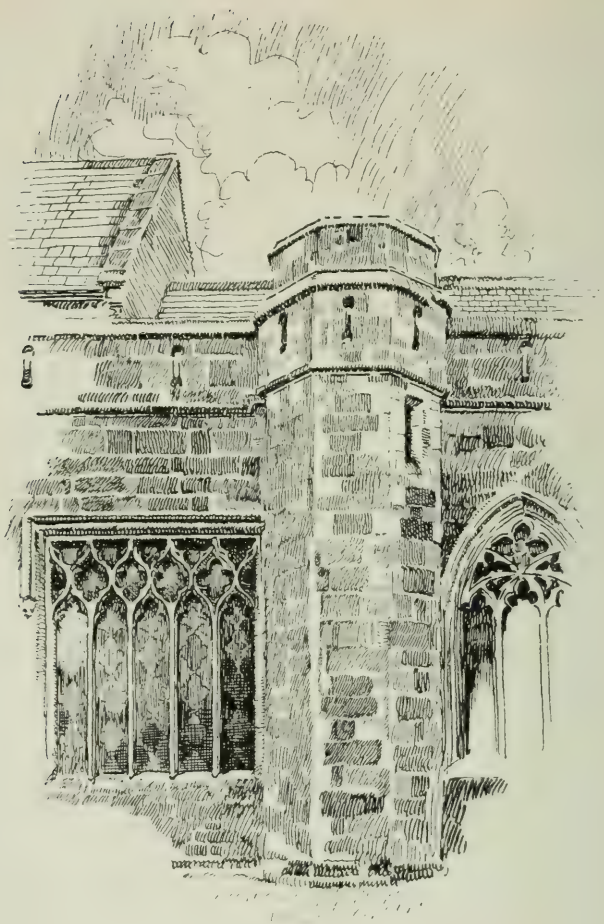
MERE lies in a curious indeterminate country of bare downs and lowland and wooded hills. It is one of those small decayed towns characteristic of the south country and pleasant enough, but it has this special thing about it, which indeed explains the strangely various nature of the country in which it lies, for it is, as it were, the nodal point where three counties meet: if you go east you go back into Wiltshire, if you go south you go immediately into Dorset, if you go west you go right into Somerset—its name indicates that it was an ancient boundary. The site was undoubtedly important, and in the year 1253 the manor came into the hands of a personage of the blood royal, to wit, Richard Earl of Cornwall, who was given permission to build a castle on the "Castle Hill" above the town and later to fortify it. In the time of King Henry IV., the castle and Lordship of Mere were in the possession of Henry Prince of Wales and Duke of Cornwall, and as a part of the Duchy of Cornwall,

the town remains to this day, as the clock tower erected on the site of the old market house in 1866 bears witness. Of the castle nothing at all remains.

But the town, which has a population of some 2,000, is not without interest, it boasts of more than one medieval building, and in the partly fifteenth century Chantry House near the church William Barnes, the Dorset poet, once kept school; while the Ship Inn, with the fine ironwork of its sign, is worth inspection, but the most interesting building in the place is, as we might expect, the church.

Dedicated in honour of St. Michael, this, as we see it, consists of clerestoried nave of five bays, the windows of the clerestory blind on the north side, north and south aisles, north and south porches each with a room over, clerestoried chancel with north and south chapels, and a western tower. The earliest written record we have of the church dates from 1091, when St. Osmund received from the Conqueror a grant of the revenues of the church, and a further record of a hundred years later gives us the name of the church which had become a peculiar of the Deans of Sarum. Mr. Ponting, however, who has restored the church, has found material evidence in the building of an earlier church than one of the end of the eleventh century. At the west end of the nave over the tower arch there, and not only there, he has discovered work he believes to be Saxon, and he considers that early in the thirteenth century a fire destroyed the chancel and the roof of the nave even then of nearly its present length, and that in the year 1220 when we know it to have been visited by De Wanda, the first Dean of New Sarum, a new chancel had been built but was not yet roofed. Of the work then carried out (1220) part of the east wall in the chancel remains with the western piscina there in the south wall, and the arched recess thought to be the Easter Sepulchre, and the doorway on the north wall. This doorway led to a chapel or sacristy, as is proved not only by its form but by the piscina without.

A hundred years after this, in 1325, the north chapel was built by John de Mere with the south arcade of the chancel and the arcade between the chapel and the south aisle. Then, in 1350, Sir John Battishorne built the south chapel and dedicated it in honour of the Annunciation on the site of an earlier chapel of our Lady. Twenty years later the south aisle and the south porch with the room over it were built, and in 1380 the



Mere Church, Detail.

north and east walls of the north chapel were rebuilt, and the chapel re-roofed as we now see. A new arch between the north

aisle and the north chapel which still remains was also erected. In 1303 the north aisle and the north porch with room over it now used as a Museum were built. Then not later than 1463 the whole body of the church was remodelled by Dr. Gilbert Kymes, Dean of Salisbury, the chancel arch was raised, as was the western arch of the arcade in the south wall of the south chapel; the north and south arcades of the nave and chancel were rebuilt with clerestories, the nave was grandly roofed as we see, the turret for the sanctus bell was built and the magnificent tower was erected, and a little later the eastern arch was inserted in it, and the tower most nobly ceiled. Then, too, the splendid rood screen 15 feet high and 23 feet 6 inches long was built, a new font of purbeck erected, and the stalls in the choir renewed. The arms of Dr. Kymes appear there in the ends of the choir desks. To the Jacobean time belong the old seats in the nave and the pulpit.

It is said that the high altar was dedicated in honour of St. Thomas of Canterbury, though how this could be since the church was St. Michael's I do not know. The chief feature in the north chapel is the squint in one of the mullions of the screen. Here it is said "Gerard the Bedeman" used to stand to await the elevation and to ring the sacring bell. The Battishorne Chantry or north chapel has some very fine old glass of 1460, similar to that in Edington Church. It represents St. Nicholas, St. Martin, St. Christopher and an archbishop. Here, too, are hatchments, funeral helmets and a gauntlet of the Chafyn and Grove families. The fine brass before the altar here of Sir John Battishorne (1308) is remarkable as commemorating the dominical letter (E) for the year. Sir John was lord of Chadenwyche (pronounced Charnage) and left all his property to his only daughter Elizabeth, who married Sir John Berkeley, the remains of whose brass are also on the floor of this chapel. This brass is described by Aubrey as that "of a chevalier with a greyhound at his feet: his wife's effigies is lost as also the escutcheons and inscription." To-day only a fragment is left. Some remains of fourteenth century tiles are to be seen near the steps. Under the eastern arch of the arcade is a purbeck altar-tomb with elaborate tracery and shields. It is probably the monument of the first Lord Stourton (1463). In the tower are six bells of which one, number five, is medieval. It bears the following inscription: "STELLA MARIA MARIS

SUCCURRE PIISSIMA NOBIS," and two shields charged with arms. The noble north porch with its fine vaulting should be noticed. Over it is the room now used as a Museum. Of the various exhibits only the alabaster tablet representing the "Adoration of the Magi" is of much interest. This was dug up under the Castle Hill.

It will thus be seen that Mere church is of the highest interest, but its beauty did not keep me from retracing my footsteps a mile southward and east to see the old manor house of Woodlands, of which, alas! only the wall and the chapel remain. They seem to have been built in the fourteenth century, ca. 1370. The building forming the chapel is of two storeys, the lower of which seems merely to have been a vault or crypt which raised up the chapel to a higher level than the hall. This chapel proper remains structurally in its original condition, but it has suffered many vicissitudes. In the seventeenth century it was desecrated and used as a living room, and a chimney stack was built against the outside of the wall. A chimney piece of fine design was erected against the west wall of the chapel and a similar one in the room beneath, which bore the arms of Dodington impaling Francis. The Dodingtons came into possession of Woodlands in the middle of the fourteenth century, and it is doubtless to them we owe both the chapel and the hall. Christopher Dodington, who died in 1584, married Margaret Francis of Combe Florey in Somerset, and it is their arms we see on the chimney piece in the room below the chapel. The family continued to hold Woodlands till 1705 when Stephen Dodington sold the place. It is worth some trouble to see.

The Chafyn-Groves family, whose gauntlets and funeral helmets remain in the north chapel of Mere church, have their seat at Zeals House to the west of Mere half way on the road to Zeals, a beautiful, interesting house with a fine carved roof, where Charles II. slept one night when in hiding. Zeals stands quite on the frontiers of Somerset, Dorset and Wiltshire, close to Pen Pits and Penselwood.[1]

Penselwood "the head of the Forest" is the southern terminal of the great wood, Selwood, and near it almost within living memory stood a shire-stone called Egbert's Stone, and it was there, as we shall see when we come to speak of Edington, that the lords of Somerset and of Wiltshire and of Dorset with their

[1] See my *Highways and Byways in Somerset* (Macmillan, 1913), p. 219.

followers met King Alfred, and next day set out eastward to fight and to defeat at Ethandune the Danish barbarians who had ruined half the West. This is for an Englishman, and indeed for all the Christian civilisation of the West, holy ground. Alfred's Tower, three miles away northward over the Stourton woods, was erected in 1766 by Mr. Hoare of Stourhead to mark the supposed spot upon which Alfred's standard was raised. I lay there on the hills half a day looking over the forest westward to where, in the marshes of Somerset, Glastonbury rose in the light summer mists 500 feet into the blue, and then towards evening I turned away northward towards Stourton, a most beautiful place in a deep combe on the edge of the forest.

The delight of this place hidden from the bare world about it in the bosom of the woods which quite fill this enchanted valley must be seen to be realised. The little ancient church stands back from the road behind three dreaming beeches of great size and beauty. It was restored in 1578 but not too brutally, and there lie the Stourtons, the old lords of the manor, a lady of the fourteenth century, her effigy still preserved and the fifth baron and his lady, Agnes Fauntleroy, too, in effigy (1536), fine works of that unhappy time beneath an old window which still keeps a few fragments of its ancient glass. In the south aisle are the monuments of the Hoares, their successors, and there is the marble tomb of Sir Richard Colt Hoare the Wiltshire archæologist and author of "Ancient and Modern Wiltshire," the greatest archæological work the county can boast.

The family of Stourton, which for so long held the manor here, is of very high antiquity, and we read even that "Stourton was belonging to the family before the Conquest. They say that after the victory at Battaile, William the Conqueror came in person into the West to receive their rendition—that the lord Abbot of Glastonbury and the rest of the lords and the grandees of the western parts waited upon the Conqueror at Stourton House where the family continues till this day." That was written in 1697 and the family endured here until Queen Anne's days when Stourton was bought by Sir Thomas Meres, whose heirs in 1720 sold to Henry Hoare the banker, the ancestor of the present owners, who then rebuilt the great house.[1] The

[1] A drawing of old Stourton House may be seen in *W.A.M.* 1. 194.

most famous member of the old family was that unhappy lord who lies in Sarum Cathedral, perhaps in St. Osmund's tomb, the six apertures of which, properly for the exposure of the relics of the saint, are since Wyatt's vandalism pointed to as emblematical of the six sources of the Stour from which the family had its name. This lord was hanged on March 6, 1556, in the market place of Salisbury for the murder of the two Hartgills, father and son, who thwarted his design of extorting a written promise and bond from his mother the Dowager Lady Stourton, over whom he had a curious influence, not to marry again. He was hanged it is said with a silken rope because he was a peer of the realm, and it is asserted that a twisted wire with a noose hung over his tomb till the year 1775.[1]

In the year 1720 Henry Hoare bought the Stourton domain, and it is the beautiful grounds, parks and gardens that he and his descendants laid out and the fine collection of pictures they made which we see to-day at Stourhead.

The entrance to this noble English paradise is guarded by a monument the most curious to find here in this country solitude. It is the beautiful old fourteenth century Cross of the city of Bristol we see there at the park gates, that originally stood at the cross roads within the city and, enlarged in 1633, was in 1733 set up again on College Green and brought here in 1766. Surely it is time that it was returned to the citizens of Bristol! The thefts of the eighteenth century by the rich from the community are notorious and sully every noble name in England, but few of them cry out for reparation so shrill as this. It was not removed from Bristol with the consent or at the wish of the citizens but was given by a certain gentleman, unfortunately a clergyman "to whom it did not belong!" to Henry Hoare, who set it up here. The Henry Hoare, the ancestor of the present owners, who might well make reparation for this gross misdeed, seems to have had a faculty for appropriating "unconsidered trifles." In 1766 he acquired the Bristol Cross; in the previous year he had removed from Bristol, the seventeenth century building known as St. Peter's Pump, called also St. Edith's Well, which till then had stood in St. Peter's Street, on the site of a fifteenth century cross erected by a Bristol mayor in 1474. The beautiful cross at any rate should be returned to the city which it ought never to have

[1] See *supra*., p. 44.

left, which indeed it would never have left but for the impudent "gift" of what did not belong to him by Dean Barton.

Nothing in all this country is lovelier than the grounds of Stourhead, one can wander there a whole day and not have one's fill of them; and so I did: coming at last, after visiting St. Peter's Pump and the six sources of the Stour and all the curiosities to Alfred's Tower and Jack Straw's Castle, an enormous sepulchral earthwork excavated by Sir R. C. Hoare, whence there is a glorious view over Somerset to Bruton, Castle Cary and beyond. At evening under the woods, by the sources of the Wylye, I came into the high and noble town of Maiden Bradley behind its strangely isolated hills King Knoll and Little Knoll, which, though they be the last of the chalk in their isolation, seem to speak of Somerset as assuredly did the inn at which I slept.

In the morning I went first to see the old house, now "Walton's Stores," but once the New Inn with its fine staircase and mantelpieces and friezes, and then to the church, which has lost nearly all its interest from restoration. It was for the most part a building of the fourteenth century, but that a Norman building stood here is testified by the purbeck Norman font. But from the point of view of religious buildings Maiden Bradley keeps for us memories more interesting than this restored church. At the time of the Domesday Survey, Walter Giffard held Maiden Bradley of the King, he was a son of Osborne de Bolebec and had been present at Hastings, on which account William made him Earl of Buckingham and gave him among numerous lordships this of Bradley in Wiltshire. He it was who bestowed the church of Bradley upon the Canons of a priory he had founded at Notley in Buckinghamshire. But it was not from him that Bradley got its Christian name of Maiden.

We learn that in the reign of King Henry II., a certain Manasser Biset held the manor of Bradley and obtained permission to establish here a chapel for the benefit of leprous women; and the same person also founded a society of seculars under the title of *procuratores mulierum*, whose duty it was to protect the interests of the sisterhood. But Bishop Hubert of Sarum in 1180 changed these seculars for a Prior and Canons of the Order of St. Augustine.

The site of the hospital and priory thus established was not

in Bradley itself, but fully a mile to the north in the valley towards Great Bradley Wood. It would seem, however, that the story of the foundation is uncertain. Not Manasser Biset, dapifer to Henry II., but " one of his heiresses herself, a maiden infected with leprosie," founded the house here " for maidens that were leperes and endowed the same with her owne patrimonie and livetude." So runs the tale, but it is certain that Margery Biset, who is the heiress involved, was not a leper in 1237, for she then sought and obtained permission to visit Eleanor of Brittany, the King's cousin. In 1242 we find the following entry in a Patent Roll : " At the petition of Margery Biset, the king has granted to the house of St. Matthew Bradeley and the infirm sisters thereof for ever five marks yearly . . . . which he had before granted to the said Margery for life." Perhaps she became a leper before her death. In any case she seems her life long to have lived a maiden and to have devoted herself to the practice of religion, and it seems to have been from her that Bradley got its title of Maiden. On the other hand, it must be noted that this hospital, so famous in Wiltshire traditions, was commonly known as and probably first dedicated in honour of our Lady and it may have been therefore that Bradley was known as Maiden Bradley. It is possible that it was only after the advent of the Augustinians that the name of St. Matthew came in. At any rate, the fair granted to the house in 1215 was established upon the vigil and feast of the Apostle. Some remnants of the priory are still to be seen in the interesting range of buildings, now the stables and cow houses of Priory Farm.

At the suppression the place was visited and reported on by the infamous Layton, and the community having been dissolved, the property was granted to Sir Edward Seymour by the king in 1538, whose descendant, the Duke of Somerset, still resides here at Bradley House. That Sir Edward Seymour who was Speaker of the House of Commons in the time of Charles II. lies in a fine tomb in the church.

Near the old priory is the farm house of New Mead, and this was the birthplace of the Parliamentary General and regicide, Edmund Ludlow, who afterwards quarrelled with Cromwell and was imprisoned, flying at the Restoration to Vevey, where he wrote his memoirs and died, his futile attempts to return to England even after the Revolution of 1688

causing him to have inscribed over the door of his Swiss home:

OMNE SOLUM FORTI PATRIA QUIA PATRIS.

From Gate Bench, or as they say, Kate's Bench, for they pretend one of the leper maidens would here look out over Somerset, one may see Witham beneath the woods in the forest of Selwood. Here Henry II. established the first Carthusian monastery in England, over which St. Hugh was presently appointed prior.[1]

From Maiden Bradley and all its strange beauty I set out eastward under Brimsdown Hill and Cold Kitchen for the Deverills, those villages in the valley of that name by which I intended to pass to Warminster before night.

And first I came to Kingston Deverill, some three miles from Maiden Bradley. The church of our Lady there consists of chancel, nave, with chapel on the south and central tower; but it has been largely rebuilt in 1847. Indeed only the arcade of two bays between the nave and chapel and the fine tower is old—of the fourteenth century, the tower being of later date than the arcade. In the chancel there is a recumbent effigy of the earlier time, but it has been brutally restored: better are the panels of the pulpit which are Flemish work, as is the sixteenth century glass in the west window.

Kingston Deverill looks better than it is—Monkton Deverill, not a mile lower down the valley, has, however, even less to show. Of the church only the Perpendicular tower and the Norman font are old, though here again the pulpit panels representing scenes from the Old Testament are interesting. Then a mile beyond Monkton lies Brixton Deverill, where, according to Hoare, was Egbert's Stone which we have thought to be at Penselwood. Here the Wiltshire historian thought Alfred gathered his men before Ethandune; we cannot follow him, but it was probably here that their camp was fixed at the end of their first day's march. In Domesday Book Brictric[2] was lord here, and so Brixton has probably nothing to do with Ægbryht or Egbert. Brixton Deverill is more interesting than either of its western sisters, for it boasts an old church and an old manor house close by. The church of St. Michael consists

[1] See my *Highways and Byways in Somerset*, p. 208.

[2] See *infra*.

of chancel, nave, and western tower, the lower part of the latter being even of the thirteenth century as appears at once when we see the arch into the nave within. The upper or belfry stage was rebuilt in the Perpendicular time and the spire, parapet doorway and west window are modern (1852). It is, however, in the chancel arch that we see the finest thing in the church; it is a noble work of the early thirteenth century, having fine deep mouldings and springs from clustered shafts. The rest of the church is a rebuilding of the early eighteenth century. The medieval Ave bell remains: it bears the inscription—✠ AVE GRACIA.

Not even so much as this awaits one at Hill Deverill, a little lower down the valley where it begins to open. Here the old church has been done away with altogether, and a new and wretched one built in 1843. Its only beautiful possession beyond its dedication, which is in honour of the Assumption of our Lady, is a very beautiful altar tomb of the late fourteenth century bearing panels of arms, Ludlow arms empaling others, for it is a Ludlow who is buried therein, and the family owned the manor, and their old manor house stands close by, a building of Elizabeth's time but remodelled in the days of Queen Anne, when Brixton Deverill Church was rebuilt, and by the same family, the Cokers. The gates only date from 1781. Adjoining the house however is a great barn of fifteen bays which is probably earlier than any part of the house which remains, and in the farmyard are the remains of buildings of the end of the fifteenth century, a gateway and porch, some walls and a roof with a coat of arms of the Ludlows over the gateway.

All this is charming but undoubtedly the best of the Deverills is the last and the largest, Longbridge Deverill, where there is a church of SS. Peter and Paul, which in spite of restoration and additions has some claim to be noticed. It stands behind a nobly aged yew in the churchyard and consists of clerestoried nave with north and south aisles, chancel with a north chapel and an organ chamber on the south, a western tower and south porch. The earliest work is the north arcade of the nave which is, like parts of the font, Norman. The south arcade is of the end of the fourteenth century, and both are of chalk. The tower is of the same date. The north aisle and its roof, and the arches into the north or Bath chapel and into the organ chamber on the south, are of the sixteenth century; while the

chancel and the north and south chapels with the vestry, though the latter possess a fine fourteenth century piscina, are modern. In the Bath chapel on the north is the armour and tomb of that Sir John Thynne who built Longleat and died in 1580. It is to his descendant Sir James Thynne that we owe the beautiful almshouses here at Longbridge Deverill. They were founded in 1665 for six men and two women, and are happily still used for the purpose of the founder.

Longleat lies away to the west—one of the stately homes of Old England in which Wiltshire is especially rich. The old rhyme tells us :—

> Horner, Paget, Portman, Thynne,
> When the monks stepped out you stepped in—

and so when we hear of Sir John and are told that he built Longleat and died in 1580 we may expect to find that he founded his house on a spoilt convent. Well, of course it is so. In or about the year 1270 Sir John Vernon founded a little priory of the order of St. Augustine where the palace of Longleat now stands and dedicated it to the honour of St. Radagund. The religious built a mill close by to which water was brought by a long *leat* or water course from Horningsham, and so Longleat got its name. All went happily till the little house was suppressed in 1529 and granted by the Crown to Sir John Horsey, whose old manor house of Woodhouse, now a mere fragment, in some sort remains near Horningsham. He sold it in 1540 to Sir John Thynne, the *protégé* of the Protector Somerset whom he presently joined in the Tower. But Thynne was "an ingenious man and a travalier," he kept his master's accounts, and seems in this to have brought some odium upon his principal. "There is nothing," wrote Paget—he also is in the rhyme—"his grace of Somerset requires so much as to take heed of that man's proceedings." However, the principal was beheaded, the servant escaped, and as soon as Mary was dead he was received into favour, and in 1567 began the building of Longleat as is now thought after his own plans, assisted by Robert Smithson, and finished in 1579. The whole of the outside from the hall to the chapel court was completed and Queen Elizabeth had stayed there, in 1575, but in the middle of the seventeenth century Sir James Thynne, the founder of the Longbridge almshouses, added the great stairs and the stone terrace under

the supervision of Sir Christopher Wren, who also is said to have designed the principal doorway now removed to the Grammar School Thomas Thynne founded in 1707 in Warminster. In 1670 the house came to "Tom of the Ten Thousand," the Issachar of "Absalom and Achitophel," who entertained Monmouth here in 1680 in his western progress, and who was shot at last by Count Konigsmark in Pall Mall. From him Longleat came to the first Viscount Weymouth, the friend of Bishop Ken, who there found a refuge when he was deprived of his See. It was the third Viscount Weymouth who became the first Marquis of Bath, and it is to him are due the gardens and "pleasure ground" which "Capability" Brown laid out for him.



Longleat.

Within, Longleat is really a creation of the early nineteenth century when it was remodelled by Sir J. Wyatville. It is rich in noble pictures and fine furniture and rarest books, and is, of course, one of the places best worth seeing in the county.

From Longleat by Heaven's Gate one passes through the beautiful park and out to the south of Clay Hill Camp to Warminster, that old town which is generally reckoned to stand in the Wylye vale, but, which truly is set quite upon the watershed here, so that such waters as flow down north or west in its gutterways pass at last into the Severn Sea, but those which run south and east into the English Channel; over all lies the shadow of the Plain.

"Warminster," says Cobbett, "is a very nice town, everything belonging to it is *solid* and *good*. There are no villainous gingerbread houses running up and no nasty shabby-genteel people; no women trapesing about with showy gowns and dirty necks, no Jew-looking fellows with dandy coats, dirty shirts, and half heels to their shoes. A really nice and good town.

It is a great corn-market—one of the greatest in this part of England—and here things are still conducted in the good old fashion." All that remains very true of Warminster, and yet I suppose the town is quieter and sleepier than it was in Cobbett's day, and will yet grow more quiet and more sleepy. But no one who has so much as slept in it but does feel an affection for it, and this though it has neither ornaments nor beauty. I do not know what it is, but there is something in the air of this quiet old town that compels both our liking and respect.

Warminster is very old, even its name is a mystery; it is said to derive it from a "minster" or convent which stood on the banks of the Mere, the site of which is traditionally marked by a place called the Nunnery, but we have no knowledge of this house or of any such foundation; there is no mention of it at all in the Domesday Survey when Warminster was held by the Crown, the tenant of the manor, a Maudit, from the time of Henry I. to Richard II. having to provide the King with lodging when he visited these parts. This service was paid by Sir James Thynne as lord of the manor when in 1663 he entertained Charles II. and later George III. and his family.

It is very unfortunate that a town so old and so dignified as Warminster does not possess a single building of any great interest. The parish church is for the most part a rebuilding of our own day; one little eleventh century window bears witness to the Norman church which once stood here and the porch, south aisle of the chancel and the tower have remains of medieval work; as a whole the church is modern. It is the same with the Chantry Chapel of St. Lawrence, built in the reign of Edward I.; it only retains its fifteenth century tower. Perhaps the most genuine building in the place is the eighteenth century Grammar School with Sir Christopher Wren's door from Longleat, founded by the first Lord Weymouth in 1707. Here several men of distinction have been educated, among them Dr. Arnold and Dean Stanley. If one must see a fine old building it is necessary to go as far as Corsley, four miles away westward by road, where the manor house of brick now a farm remains a very charming building of the time of Elizabeth. It was the dower house of Sir John Thynne's widow, where she lived after his death in 1580, and whence she married a brother of Sir Walter Raleigh. The church was rebuilt in 1829, but it possesses a medieval paten of the beginning of the sixteenth century.

CHAPTER XV

UNDER SALISBURY PLAIN—WARMINSTER TO DEVIZES

I LEFT Warminster very early one fine morning intent on making my way all under the steep northern escarpment of the Plain by Westbury and Edington to Devizes, and the first place I came to on that road was Upton Scudamore.

Upton is well named—it stands high, more than 400 feet above the sea on the most western cape of the main Plain. It got its name of Scudamore as early as the time of King Stephen when Walter Scudamore held lands here, and his son Godfrey got a grant of the whole vill from Robert de Ewyas in the following reign. Thus the Scudamores established themselves here, and in the thirteenth century obtained for Upton a charter for a market day every Thurdsay, and a fair of three days on the vigil, the feast and the morrow of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin (September 8), in whose honour the church is dedicated. This they probably rebuilt largely as we see it, but the ancient font, possibly Saxon, and fine sculptured north porch, a work of the end of the twelfth century, perhaps also due to the family, remain from an older building. In the large north chapel two of the Scudamore tombs may be seen or rather two old and much decayed recumbent effigies, male and female, which are thought to represent Peter Scudamore and his wife Margery (*temp.* Edward I.).

From Upton it is a walk of some two miles up and down into Westbury, now because of the railway the chief place of all this district. Westbury might seem to be getting back some of the importance it appears to have enjoyed a thousand years ago. That it was a place of renown in Saxon days is traditionally proven by that moated site at Westbury Leigh called Palace

Garden, where the Saxon kings are supposed to have had a palace.

In the Domesday Survey we read that Westbury had been held by Edith, queen of St. Edward, and was then in the King's hand. His tenant was William Scudet, and it is not till the time of Edward I. that the family of Pavely appears, whose last male heir Sir John de Pavely, died in 1361, Prior in the order of St. John of Jerusalem. He left two daughters and it is through them that the St. Maurs, the Willoughbys and Maudits came to possess Westbury. The Willoughbys appear in the fifteenth century when Westbury cannot have been less prosperous than Frome. It decayed, however, with the failure of the cloth industry in the west of England, and though the discovery of a vein of iron ore at Ham close by, not long ago, where Roman pottery and coins have also been found, seemed to promise it an industrial future, this failed, and it is as a railway junction that Westbury confidently faces the world to-day.

It is not in any such modern development that it will interest us, however. Not the station but the church is the place we seek, nor shall we be disappointed, for it is a noble building of considerable size amid glorious chestnut trees. Dedicated in honour of All Saints, it is a cruciform building with fine central Perpendicular tower consisting of clerestoried nave of four bays with aisles, and north chapel, and north and south transepts, chancel with north and south chapels and two porches one on the north of the nave and the other at the west end. Doubtless the church stands on Norman foundations and this the narrowness of the aisles bears witness to, but as we see it, it is a building of the earlier part of the fifteenth century, the chapels being later, those north and south of the chancel with their fine original roofs being of the end of the fifteenth century, that on the north of the nave, also with a fine roof, of the sixteenth. As the buttresses of the aisles seem to suggest, the clerestory is later than the nave, and probably dates from about 1480, when I suppose the western porch also to have been built. The whole is very spacious, and the stone bench seats carried round it adds to its dignity. The south chancel chapel is that of the Willoughbys, who presently took the name of de Broke from the old mansion of the Pavelys, Broke House, two miles away. The north chancel chapel is that of the Maudits; but

whose is the recessed tomb in the south transept? Perhaps a Pavely lies there. The Caroline monument there with effigies is that of Sir James Ley, who became Earl of Marlborough, and of his wife. Sir James was

> That good Earl, once President
> Of England's Council and her Treasury,
> Who liv'd in both unstain'd with gold or fee
> And left them both, more in himself content
> Till the sad breaking of that Parliament
> Broke him in that dishonest victory
> At Choeronea fatal to liberty
> Kil'd with report that old man eloquent. . . .

So Milton thought; but Sir James Whitelocke denounces him as "an old dissembler" who was "wont to be called Volpone" and accused him of borrowing money of the judges when Lord Chief Justice. He was certainly a climber, and owed his peerage to the White King, yet was a friend of Milton's. Here he lies with his secret.

Under the White Horse on Bratton Down I went on to Bratton and saw the noble church there before lunch. There is nothing in all this county finer in its way than this airy and spacious village church of stone, a work as we see it of the early fifteenth century. It is a cruciform building with fine central tower of four stages splendidly ceiled, and consists of clerestoried nave of two bays with north and south aisles, transepts and chancel, with three doorways north, south and west of the nave, the two former strangely far to the east and the south doorway having a porch. The position of these two side doorways perhaps is due to the older church, which certainly stood here in Norman times, as the bowl of the font still testifies, as do the east walls of the transepts and the walls of the porch. Apart from them the whole church is a really fine work of the early Perpendicular time at its best, and gives one a most happy notion of the art of the fifteenth century.

After luncheon I went slowly up on to Bratton Down to see the White Horse, which I shall always believe to be a monument to the victory of Alfred and the West Saxons over the Danes at Ethandune. Lying there on the short grass high over the great vale to the north, the vale of the Avon, the Mendips before me, to the south-west the marshes of Somerset, and to the south the huge rollers of the lofty Plain, I considered slowly in my heart of that great victory only less important in the

history of this island and of western Europe than the landings of Caesar, of St. Augustine, and of William of Normandy. What we see from the White Horse on Bratton Down is the gathering and the breaking of the second darkness which goes to make up the Dark Age here in England. The first night was full of the Saxon raids, the failure of the Roman administration, the engulfing of Christianity in a sea of paganism; the second was the almost victorious onslaught of the Dane, another wave of heathen barbarism which threatened to destroy the Christian state refounded here by Rome at the end of the sixth century at the hands of St. Augustine. Britain of course was not threatened alone; she was and is a part of the West and in the later years of the ninth century the whole West was in greater peril perhaps than ever before, as much from a strange reaction from the glory of Charlemagne, the sudden dissolution of his empire and the decay of the monastic system which went with it, as from the barbarians. Had the Scandinavians fallen upon a Europe really informed by the Faith they would not have succeeded as nearly as they did. The West and with it all the future seemed about to be engulfed; they were saved at Ethandune.

The invasion of the West by the Danes was dangerous and especially at that most critical moment, not because the invader was Scandinavian and barbarous, but because he was a pagan. It was the Faith, which had re-created Europe and alone informed it, that was in danger and with it the civilisation it had inspired and the whole future. That Alfred understood this is the surest sign of his genius, that he was able to meet the danger is his immortal renown.

Consider it, then: at Easter, in the year 878, when he who had been king of England and was now a fugitive looked eastward from the marshes of Athelny, he saw before him a country wholly in the hands of the pagans, its people massacred or enslaved, its churches and monasteries ruins. At Whitsuntide he decided to make his great attempt. At Egbert's Stone by Penselwood, where Dorset, Somerset and Wiltshire meet, he gathered the men of the three shires under their lords and went there to meet them: "And seeing the king as was meet come to life again as it were after such tribulations and receiving him they were filled with an immense joy and there the camp was pitched."

Thence on the following day Alfred and his host set out eastward to put all to the test.

They came up over the short grass of the downs wave after wave, a great army of men and camped, as we may think, over the valley of the Deverill in a place still called King's Hill, and at dawn again they went onward. Then at last, as they came up out of the Wylye Vale and saw the great earthwork on Bratton Down, which we call Bratton Castle, they found their enemy the pirate host, and they went in to battle on the long slope of this very down which the White Horse still marks a place of victory. Here we may almost say the fate of Christendom was decided, certainly the fate of England was. For the end of that long encounter flung the pagans back into their earthwork—we held them tight in siege for fourteen days, and at the end thereof, vanquished "by hunger cold and fear," they surrendered. There Alfred made his terms—Guthrum the pagan king should become a Christian the which was done at Aller in the marshes.

Now it has been asserted that this great affair, one of the greatest in our long history, did not take place here on Bratton Down at all but upon the Polden Hills in Somerset. Such an assertion in my opinion cannot be defended. The site of Alfred's victory is given in the Saxon Chronicle as Ethandune, and there is no other indication of the site save what may be drawn from this that the headquarters of the Danes both before and after the battle were at Chippenham in that wide Avon valley to the north of Bratton Down. Ethandune has from time out of mind[1] been identified with Edington here a mile away north of Bratton under the escarpment of the plain, and Edington is the only place which can be proved to have borne the name of Ethandune; indeed, it was written Ethendun as late as 1280. Now King Alfred bequeathed Ethendun to Ealhswith his wife, and in 957 King Eadwig executed a charter, of which the original is still in existence, at Ethandun. In 968 the place was granted to the Abbey of Romsey by Edgar, and in Domesday Book it appears as Edendone, while the Somersetshire Edington appears there as Eduwinetune, and in the Exon Domesday as Edwinetona.

I have said nothing of the White Horse, and that because it

[1] Camden, one of our first topographers, so identifies it, and he probably got his information from the people, who held fast to the tradition.

has been entirely recut in the turf. A Mr. Gee, steward to Lord Abingdon, surveying his lordship's estates in the parish of Westbury in 1778, being, I suppose, a lover of horses did not care for the shape of the animal he saw. It is as though a trainer to-day were to destroy Uccello's masterpiece in the National Gallery, because the horses there drawn did not appeal to him as what a horse should be. Mr. Gee remodelled the whole work, and curiously enough Alfred's horse disappeared



Edington Church.

for ever under a truly Wiltshire restoration when it was exactly 900 years old (878–1778). Mr. Gee's restoration was itself restored in 1853, but there is this to be said. The White Horse on Bratton Down was enormously old and except perhaps the White Horse at Uffington which names that valley it was the only White Horse in Wiltshire that was ancient at all, the rest being creations of the eighteenth century.

Considering all this I went down some hours before sunset to Edington, to see once more the noble and beautiful church of All Saints, which the nuns of Romsey built. As I have said, it was King Edgar who in the year 968 granted Edington to the

Abbey of Romsey, and for centuries the Abbess was patron of the Rectory, the rector being Prebendary of Edington in the church of Sarum, leaving his parochial duties to the vicar. In 1338 the Abbess nominated a rector for the last time, for a few years later a great change took place in the church of Edington owing to the influence of a famous native of the place, William of Edington, who became Bishop of Winchester in 1345. This man was, like his successor at Winchester, Wykeham, a great builder and he wished as Pius II. did later to ennoble his native place. In the year 1351 therefore he established the church of Edington as a college or chantry of priests under a warden, and dedicated all in honour of our Lady, St. Katherine and All Saints. Six priests were appointed to serve it, of which the warden was still Prebendary. But before this was fully accomplished the Bishop had enlarged his ideas. He now proposed to turn his college or chantry into a monastery, and to build an entirely new monastic church there, indeed, that we now see. So eager was he that, although the Papal Bull granting him permission for his first scheme was not issued till 1354, already in 1352 he had, on July 3, laid the first stone of his convent. This he designed, it is said, at the special request of the Black Prince, for a congregation of which we know very little, the Bonshommes, a sort of friars of English origin who followed the Rule called of St. Augustine, and wore a blue dress similar to that of the Augustinian Hermits. This house at Edington and another at Ashridge, Bucks, supposed to have been founded in 1257 by Edmund of Cornwall, brother of Henry III., are the only two that this congregation could boast.

Until the convent was built and the new church so far completed as to be usable, Edington still remained in the hands of its college of priests, but in 1358 upon the 16th September they seem to have received the first tonsure, and thus from seculars became religious bound by a monastic rule and vows; only the dean refused, and so a new warden now known as rector was appointed in John of Ailesbury, a friar from the house of Ashridge. In 1361 the Priory church was finished and consecrated by Bishop Wyvile of Sarum. All went well until in 1539 Edington Friary was dissolved with the rest, the rector, then newly appointed, Paul Bush, surrendering it into the hands of the King in exchange for the Bishopric of Bristol. Sir Thomas Seymour was granted the manor and the rectory,

and when he was beheaded as a traitor in 1549 there came in Sir William Paulet and Sir John Thynne.

Turning to the church itself, all that remains to us of the work here of Bishop Edington, what do we see? We have here perhaps the finest and certainly the most symmetrical uniform and complete church of the transition from the Decorated style to the Perpendicular anywhere to be found in Wiltshire. We know the exact date of it, 1352–1361, and it remains practically unaltered.

The church is cruciform under a central tower, and consists of a lofty clerestoried nave with north and south aisles, north and south transepts and splendid chancel. A very fine south porch of three storeys, the lowest vaulted in stone, stands to the south of the nave. The domestic buildings of the monastery stood to the north of the church, and the north aisle formed one side of the cloister garth. Nothing of them remains, but the entrance to the church from the monastery may still be seen in the north aisle its arch enriched with carving.

The church was built for the double purpose of monastery and parish, the chancel being the monks' choir, the transepts monastic chapels, and here everything is richer and more varied, the mouldings are finer, the gargoyles carved. Note for instance the niche and piscina in the north transept with fine original gilding and colouring. The parish altar stood under the western arch of the tower and the nave and aisles belonged to the people.

The splendid chancel was thus a church in itself and at one time eighteen friars seem to have served it. It is three bays in length and the roof alone is modern; but even there the corbels remain over beautiful niches, four of them, in which stood figures of the four Evangelists, two of which, though mutilated, still exist.

On the east wall are two niches of most exquisite workmanship and design, the gold upon them still remains in unlikely crannies. The richer is that on the north, and this Mr. Ponting suggests held a statue of our Lady while in that to the left was a St. Katherine, in whose honour as well as in that of All Saints the church was dedicated. Note too the doorway on the south; it probably led into a watching chamber according to the same authority. The doorway on the north led into the sacristy now destroyed.

In the south transept is a very lovely altar tomb, one of the loveliest in all Wiltshire. There lies an effigy of a Bonhomme, his head resting on a cushion, his feet on a barrel. Above is a magnificent canopy with richly groined vaulting with a beautiful traceried arch before it and at each angle without, a niche, those in front containing figures of St. Peter and St. Paul. At the back is a blank space which Mr. Ponting considers was once filled with a stone panel upon which was carved a Crucifixion. The cornice is magnificently carved with a vine pattern in high relief and in the midst above all is the half figure of an angel bearing a shield, upon which is emblazoned a rebus—a branch or sprig growing from a barrel or tun. The *mensa* which supports the figure is moulded and beneath is carved the rebus five times repeated, the initials I B twice repeated, a lamb with the same sprig and a Tudor rose. The front of the tomb is divided into four panels on two of which we see the rebus and on two the Tudor rose. For all this repetition, however, we do not know the name of the person buried here.

The rood screen is, though perhaps less beautiful than we might expect, very interesting. It had a double row of stalls upon the eastern side ; but it is a late addition to the church and rich as it is, and its richness was added to in Elizabethan times, it is disappointing.

Under the second arch eastward of the nave arcade on the south is the monument of Sir Ralph Cheney, who died in 1401, and was the husband of a daughter of Sir John Pavely of Broke House. It is large and altogether formed a sort of chantry.

The font has been mutilated, but the pulpit is a fine one of the Jacobean time. Some of the old benches also remain.

The last glory of the church is its fourteenth century glass. In the three light window in the east wall of the north transept is a noble Crucifixion. The clerestory windows, too, contain figures of bishops with inscriptions, and in the windows of the north aisle is some lovely heraldic glass.

There in that lovely building one fails to understand how anyone could have had the heart to spoil it of anything and leave all empty and bare. The church owes very much to the care and knowledge of Mr. Ponting.

In the churchyard there is a noble yew whose trunk is said to be more than twenty feet in circumference.

Leland, who rather fully describes the church, speaks also

of "one Aschue, or Aschgogh, Bishop of Saresbyri in Henry 6 tyme, who was behedded in a rage of the Commons for asking a tax of money as sum say, on an hill hard by Hedington; wher at this tyme is a chapelle and a hermitage. The body



Edistoke

of him was buried in the house of Bonhoms at Hedington." This was Bishop Ayscough, who during Jack Cade's rebellion took refuge at Edington from the rising at Sarum, but the peasants dragged him from the very altar in the midst of Mass and stoned him to death hard by. His offence, according to them, was that he was a continual absentee and neglected his people. Where he lies in the church we do not know,

nor is anything left of the chapel which marked the place of his murder.

I slept at Edington, and on the following morning went on under the escarpment of the Plain through Coulston, whose church is dedicated in honour of St. Thomas Becket, a rare dedication in Wiltshire, to Erlestoke all in a great park, a very charming place of white cottages covered with flowers. On the other side of Erlestoke Park lies Great Cheverell, almost as pretty as Erlestoke, with a noble old manor house with court-house and cells. The church, too, of St. Peter, is a good one. It consists of nave, chancel, western tower, south porch and chapel on south side of the nave. The oldest part of the church is the chancel, which save for the east wall and the roof, which are modern, is of the early thirteenth century, the lancets being original, but the other window, on the south, the priest's door and the piscina are of the fifteenth century. The fine recessed tomb in the north wall is, however, of the earlier time, and is probably that of the founder, or, as Mr. Ponting suggests, an Easter Sepulchre, or again, as we may think, even both.

The nave, porch, chapel and tower are all of the middle of the fifteenth century and very good work too. The old roofs remain and that in the chapel is especially fine. The font is modern.

A tablet in the nave reminds us that Hannah More's "Mr. Johnson," in reality Sir James Stonehouse, lived here, while "the shepherd of Salisbury Plain" lived of course in the village, and his cottage indeed is still shown. The shepherd's name was David Saunders, who with his father had kept sheep on the Plain for a century. In the curious religious tract of Hannah More's he is noted for his homely wisdom and simple piety.

On leaving Great Cheverell I made for the Salisbury Devizes road, and turning south along it came into the delicious village of West Lavington, or better Bishops Lavington, for it, at one time, belonged to the Bishops of Sarum. Here is a church of much variety and interest that seems to have taken three hundred years to complete, and exhibits the styles of the late twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The earliest work is in the nave, where the north arcade is earlier than the south, though both are of the latter part of the twelfth century, as I think is the clerestory. The chancel is of about 1220, with much rebuilding and some additions; four lancet

windows and a piscina, however, remain. The north transept is a little later, while the lower stages of the tower are of the fourteenth century. In 1430 a chapel, known as the Dauntsey Chapel, was built outside the south aisle as a chantry for that family then Lords of the Manor, and here is a fine Perpendicular recessed tomb. About the end of the fifteenth century the Beckett Chapel was added on the south side of the chancel, and at the same time the upper stage of the tower was finished.



Cricket Green.

In the south transept are two altar tombs—one with an effigy of Henry Danvers.

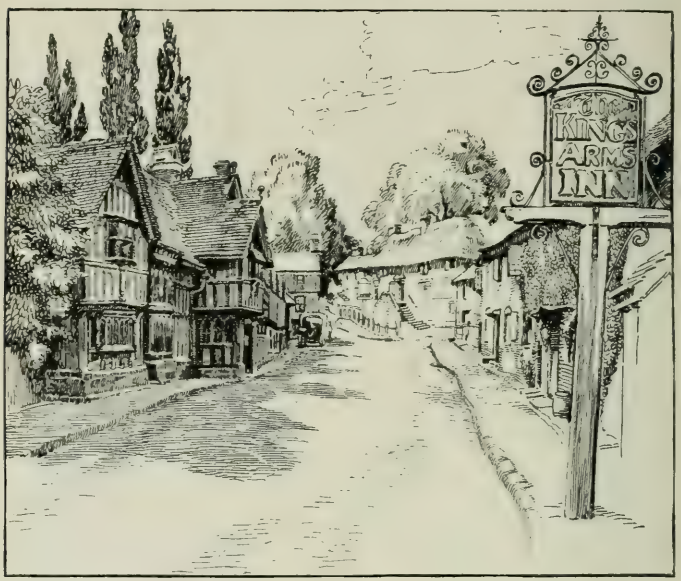
There is an inscription in the church to Captain Henry Penruddocke who, in a house here in Bishops Lavington, was murdered while asleep by some of Ludlow's soldiery, dour Puritans, who doubtless thought that to murder a sleeping man was to do God service.

A mile to the north-east of Bishops Lavington lies Market Lavington, a charming decayed place overshadowed by its fine old church of St. Mary.

That a Norman church stood here is certain, but that we see is of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the beautiful tower being of the finest Perpendicular time; while the clerestoried nave

and aisles, the south porch and chancel and sacristy, are of the late Decorated period, though the chancel has been much rebuilt.

Thus wandering through the summer day from sanctuary to sanctuary I came in the afternoon to Urchfont, to the noble church of St. Michael. This is a remarkably fine Decorated work not too well restored, and yet by no means spoilt, for much of it remains untouched. A thirteenth century church



Potterne.

seems to have stood here, and this was rebuilt in the earlier half of the fourteenth century, first the transept, then the chancel, then the south aisle ; then in the fifteenth century the nave was attached and porch, and last the tower was added. The most interesting part of the church is the chancel of three bays with its heavy buttresses and great stone vault. The roof, too, was of stone once—the roof of the porch is still of stone —but is now tiled. The bosses are carved with St. Michael and the Dragon, the Pelican, and other subjects. Most of the

windows remain, and in some there are remains of old glass with figures and angels.

The south aisle must also be noted, for it is exquisite in its



Approach to Urchfont Church.

late Decorated style, and especially lovely is the window there 'twixt porch and transept. The nave is later, but not much, and the roof there is a good one of 1631.

They told me in Urchfont or Erchfont that the name is derived from a spring there, which they showed me, and which never runs dry. In the Domesday Survey I find the name spelt Jerchesfont.

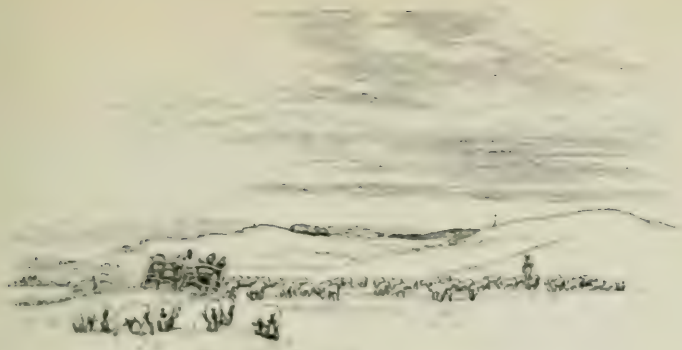
But of the churches I saw that day the most remarkable, and, yes, the most beautiful too, was that of our Lady at Potterne, where I came before sunset. In its own way the church may well stand beside Sarum Cathedral for it was founded upon a virgin spot, dedicated in honour of St. Mary, and is all of one period, and that the thirteenth century, and as at Sarum the tower is of the fourteenth century. Potterne was a manor of the Bishops of Salisbury and that may account for it. It might have been designed by Elias de Dereham. What we have at Potterne then is a wonderful cruciform building in the purest Early English style with central tower, nave, chancel and transept. Especially lovely are the lancets, above all those in the chancel a group of three, while those in the transept are double. The whole church is beyond praise for its wonderful harmony and simplicity, winning our affection and admiration by its sheer beauty of form without any ornament to help it. There is practically no sculpture, and even the mouldings are few.

A very curious font was unearthed in 1871 which I suppose to have come from the old church, for there was an old church in Potterne when this we see was built though not on this site. This font is shaped like a pail and round the top of it is carried the words of the tract sung at the Benediction of the Font on Holy Saturday: "SICUT CERVUS DESIDERAT AD FONTES AQUARUM ITA DESIDERAT ANIMA MEA AD TE DS. AMEN." [1]

Potterne is a picturesque and charming village, remarkable, apart from its wonderful church, for some good half timbered houses with projecting upper storeys. The best of these is the Porch House, perhaps an old inn known as the Pack Horse, which the late George Richmond, R.A., bought in 1872 and restored with care. It possesses a fine dining hall with an oriel.

It was evening when I left Potterne, and night had come ere I reached the friendly lights of Devizes.

[1] The Vulgate version is different. The verse was taken from the Roman Missal, which remains to-day the same. The words have nothing to do with any special version used in a "Saxon baptismal service," they are from the Roman Missal as we know it.



Roundaway Down, Devizes

CHAPTER XVI

DEVIZES AND THE VALE OF PEWSEY

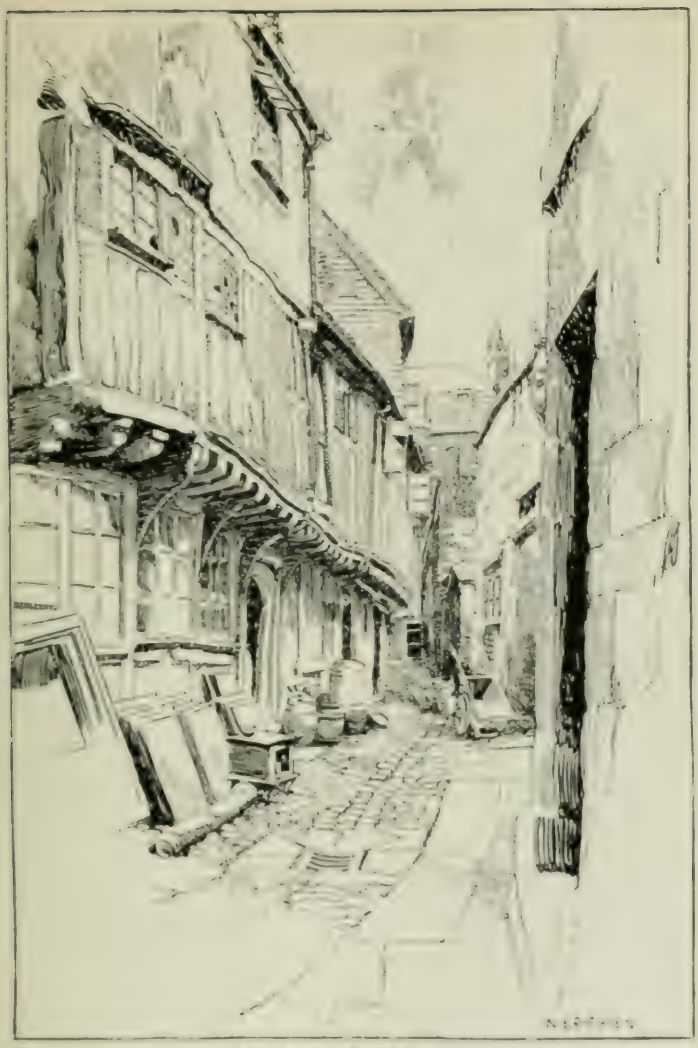
THERE is nothing, in Wiltshire certainly, quite like the site of Devizes, and no other great town save Exeter perhaps in all South England can compare with it for the noble and dramatic strength of its position. It stands five hundred feet above the sea upon a great peninsula of high land thrust out south-west into the great and wide vale of the western Avon, and as it happens it is set right over the steep escarpment deeply cut there by two ravines which at their heads nearly meet so that an almost isolated eminence with steep sides is thrust out between them from the height behind. On this peninsula stood the Castle and behind it the town grew up in a semi-circle, the curve being still marked by New Park Street and Bridewell Street.

The town which thus shines upon the high escarpment of the northern downs is set almost in the middle of the county of Wilts; it is indeed the capital of the northern part of the shire, and though no longer the most populous town therein, for Swindon boasts more than 50,000 inhabitants against its 6,700, it remains the true heart of North Wiltshire, its corn market being one of the largest in southern England. Of old it might

have set its cloth factories against the Great Western Railway works of Swindon, and, being what it is beside, have held its own even in wealth, but these ceased to exist in the early years of the nineteenth century, and since then it has depended for the most part upon agriculture for its business. It would perhaps be difficult to find in it to-day the "populous and disorderly" town Gibbon denounces.

Its history is long and interesting. To begin with, its name is difficult to understand. It seems to be derived from a Latin appellation of the Roman time or the Middle Age: Ad Divisas —at the divisions, the divisions being those of the three adjoining manors Rowde, Cannings and Potterne, which met precisely at the point where the Castle was founded. It is true that certain Roman finds have been made in the neighbourhood, a quantity of Roman pottery at Pans Lane, coins at Wick and elsewhere, and certain bronze "Penates" close to Southbroom House, but of any Roman station, villa or castrum here we have no evidence at all, nor do we know of any Saxon town upon this site. Devizes is not mentioned in the Domesday Survey and for us its history begins in the reign of Henry I., when the castle was founded by the great Chancellor-Bishop Roger of Sarum,[1] and the town grew up, as was natural in those turbulent days, under the protection though at the mercy of the Castle. Here, as Chancellor, Roger kept as his prisoner Robert of Normandy. When King Henry died Roger declared for Stephen, but though in return Stephen retained him as Justiciar, he in reality only played for his own hand. The whole administration of the kingdom was in his hands; his son was Chancellor, his nephew Nigel, Bishop of Ely and treasurer, and another nephew was Bishop of Lincoln. They all fast strengthened their castles, Nigel of Ely being in command at Devizes while Roger was at Old Sarum. Stephen became alarmed and summoned Roger and his nephews to come to him at Oxford. Roger went but there Earl de Dinan's men quarrelled with his retainers and the King seized upon this as an excuse for demanding the keys of the castles of Old Sarum and Devizes. Roger hesitated and was arrested; but Nigel of Ely rode away for Devizes, the King, with Roger as his prisoner, hot on his heels. Devizes was besieged, Roger and the Bishop of Lincoln were imprisoned in cowsheds and

[1] For a sketch of Roger's life see the chapter on Old Sarum, p. 15.



threatened with death unless the castle was surrendered. In these circumstances Matilda of Ramsbury, Roger's mistress and the mother of his son, in spite of Nigel's protest, surrendered Devizes, which thenceforth became a Royal stronghold. In the appalling struggle for the crown which followed between Matilda and Stephen, it fell now to one party, now to the other. In 1140, Robert Fitzherbert scaled the battlements with ladders of leather and seized it for Matilda ; again it was taken for the King, and again surrendered, and in 1141 Matilda sought refuge therein after the raising of the siege of Winchester ; but she had to flee and was borne away, hidden, it is said, in a coffin, to Gloucester. In 1142, however, she returned and for long the castle of Devizes was her headquarters. In Cœur de Lion's time John seized it while Richard was on Crusade and held it too, and when Henry III. was king it was the prison of Hubert de Burgh. The four earls, his gaolers, had released him from his chains and when his arch enemy, the Bishop of Winchester, to compass his death begged the governorship of the castle, he was allowed to escape, and took sanctuary in St. John's Church. But the governor had him dragged out and driven back to the castle " with fists and sticks." Then the Bishop of Salisbury came in haste to Devizes and bade them take Hubert back to the church, and when they refused, he excommunicated them, and both he and the Bishop of London went to the King and compelled him to restore Hubert to the church ; which the King did in anger, bidding at the same time the Sheriff of Wiltshire blockade the church and starve Hubert out. But on October 30th, 1233, Richard Siward and Gilbert Basset, who were wasting the lands of the Bishop of Winchester, rode up to St. John's Church and carried Hubert off to Chepstow.

The castle has, indeed, been a notable prison and almost as notable a dowry, for as such it came to no fewer than six queens.

But like all such places, little by little it fell into decay and cannot have been a formidable stronghold when Edward VI. granted it to the inevitable Lord Seymour of Sudeley. About this time we have Leland's account of it, which shows it to have been little more than a ruin :

" There is a castell on the south west syde of the toune, stately avauncyd upon an high ground, defendyd partly by nature and partly with dykes, the yere wherof is cast up a

slope, and that of a greate height to defence of the waulle. This castle was made in *Henry* the first dayes by one *Roger*



East Int. S. front. Devizes.

Bishop of Salisbyrye, Chauncelar and Treasurer to the Kynge. Such a peece of Castle worke so costly and strongly was never

afore nor sence set up by any Byshope of *England*. The kepe or dungeon of it set upon an hille cast by hand is a pece of worke of an incredible coste. There appere in the gate of it 6 or 7 places for porte colacis and much goodly buylding was in it. It is now in ruine and parte of the front of the towres of the gate of the kepe and the chapell in it were caried full unprofitably, onto the buyldynge of Master *Bainton's* place at *Bromeham* scant three myles of. There remayne dyvers goodly towres yet in the utter walle of the castle but all goynge to ruine. The principall gate that ledithe in to the toune is yet of a great strengthe and hathe places for 7 or 8 porte colices. There is a fayre parke by the castle."

The keep was still standing in the time of the great Rebellion and was besieged by the Parliament. It was surrendered to Cromwell on September 23rd, 1645, after a mere show of resistance ; he lost, indeed, but five men ; and it was dismantled by order of Parliament. It seems then to have become a sort of quarry for the neighbourhood. Stukeley writes in 1723 : " the castle is ignobly mangled and every day destroyed by persons who care not to leave a stone standing though for a wall to their gardens." To-day only the ditch and mound of the keep may be seen ; the walls are almost entirely gone. A modern castellated house stands on the height.

St. John's Church, a most interesting building, stands near the castle. It was here that Hubert de Burgh took sanctuary. The Norman church, of which this we see is largely a rebuilding of the fifteenth century, is generally asserted to have been the work of Bishop Roger, but Mr. Brakspear denies this on the ground that the transept arches of the tower are pointed. Originally the church seems to have consisted of chancel, nave, transepts and tower, but in the middle of the fifteenth century the nave was rebuilt, the aisles were added, and later still the chancel chapels were built. The chancel was restored in 1844. It is of two bays divided by a transverse arch springing from richly sculptured capitals. The old Norman vaulting remains, and in the north wall is one of the original Norman windows. Note the string course of corbel heads without. The walls within are beautifully arcaded. The tower, which is very massive with a turret in the north-west, is supported on two round and two pointed arches, and the lantern, now hidden, is

ornamented with a rich intersecting arcade.[1] The transepts are for the most part unspoiled. The two chapels north and south of the chancel have fine ceilings of oak. That on the south is the larger, and was founded by Richard Beauchamp of Bromham in the time of Henry VII., as the Tudor roses in the parapet suggest. Without, over the gate, is a beautiful but empty canopied niche. The north chapel is now used as a vestry; perhaps it was founded by that Richard Lamb who there asks for our prayers: *Orate p. bono statu Ricardi Lamb.*

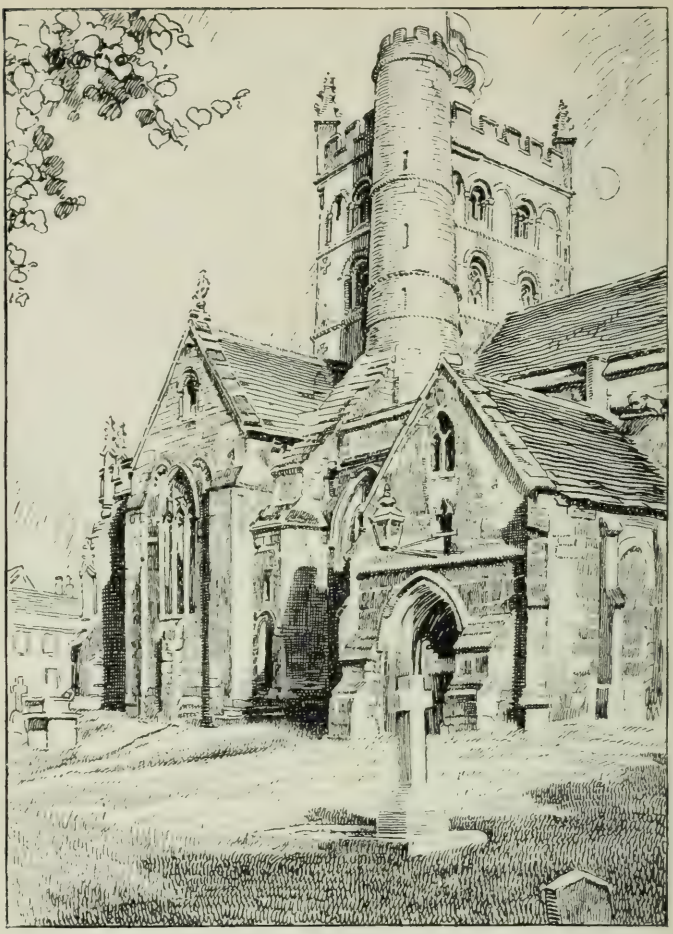
The nave and aisles were lengthened in 1865 when the old waggon roof was replaced by that we see. The extension of course ruined the west front.

St. John's, I think, was never the parish church of Devizes, but rather the church of the castle. The church of the town was that of our Lady to the north-east, reached by way of the Brittox or Tower Street, and it dates very little, if any, later than St. John's. It consists to-day of nave with aisles and double porch, chancel and western tower. Of these the chancel alone is of Norman date, the south porch being Transitional, the nave, aisles, and tower dating from the Perpendicular time.

The chancel remains Norman in fundamentals, but it has been much tampered with, and the Perpendicular windows spoil it. The east window is a rebuilding. Unfortunately, the chancel arch is also Perpendicular, but it is a fine work of its time, having a hagioscope on either side and a canopied niche above them.

The rebuilding that the church underwent in the fifteenth century was due, as we learn from an inscription on the fine roof of the nave, to William Smyth, who died in 1436: ORATE PRO AIA WILLI SMYTH QUI ISTA ECCLIAM FIERI FECIT, QUI OBIIT PRIMO DIE MENSIS JUNII ANNO DNE MILLO CCCC XXXVI. The work is thus very early, and indeed the nave and arcade may be said to be of the transition from Decorated to Perpendicular. There was some work done here in the seventeenth century, of which the upper part of the south porch is evidence. The bells also date from that time. The fine niche with its lovely statue of our Lady over the east gable of the nave is a curious and

[1] Mr. Brakspear (*W. A. M.* xxxviii., p. 451) calls attention to the fact that at some time or other the south-east pier of the old tower had collapsed and brought down nearly the whole of the south and most of the west side of the tower. He suggests that this happened in the seventeenth century.



South Side, St. John's, Devizes.

beautiful feature, only comparable with the similar niche empty, alas ! over the Beauchamp Chapel in St. John's Church.

Mr. Kite, in a notice of this and other churches in Devizes

written many years ago,[1] speaks of the wall paintings that anciently made the church both beautiful and holy. He tells us that in 1854 an Assumption of Our Lady was brought to light in the space over the third pier from the east in the nave immediately opposite the doorway of the south porch so as to meet the eye on entering. Next to it was a St. Christopher. These and similar paintings, he says, were of Queen Mary's time, and beneath them were others far lovelier. All are gone, alas! and the church is as bare as you could wish to-day.

The only other church in Devizes worth a visit for artistic reasons is St. James's, which has a fine pinnacled Perpendicular tower, which is said to bear marks of Waller's cannon balls. It stands at the east end of the town.

Leland, who calls Devizes Vies—even Clarendon always calls it "The Devizes"—says that "the beauty of it is all in one street," and adds, "the market is very celebrate." That is all he says about it, and when one has noted the two churches there is not much more to say. No one, however, who comes to Devizes should fail to visit the Wiltshire Archæological and Natural History Society's Museum near St. John's church. No museum in England is more important archæologically. It contains Sir R. C. Hoare's magnificent Stourhead collection and the topographical collection of the late James Britton. The Bear Inn should be visited, if it be not used. In the old days its landlord was the father of Sir Thomas Lawrence, the painter. He was, in his own way, as famous as his son, "the only man on the road for warm rooms, soft beds and for reading Milton." Nor was his wife behind him in good cheer. Madame D'Arblay, who stayed there with Mrs. Thrale in the spring of 1780, notes that she is "much pleased with our hostess who seemed something above her station." She happened to be the daughter of the Vicar of Tenbury. Little Thomas Lawrence used to be introduced to the company with: "Gentlemen, here's my son; will you have him recite from the poets or take your portraits?" It was indeed an "ingenious family." But the good cheer afforded the traveller at the Bear cost the landlord dear. Soon after Madame D'Arblay's visit he left Devizes for Weymouth in embarrassed circumstances. I wonder if he was landlord of the Bear when Captain Edward Gibbon of the Hampshire Militia in 1761, aged twenty-four, quartered in Devizes, on

[1] See *W. A. M.* ii. 245 (1854).

account of the "little civility of the neighbouring gentry who gave us no opportunity of dining out," set himself "to recover his Greek."

To the north of the town on the steep escarpment of the down beyond Roundway is Oliver's Camp, from which there is to be had as noble a view as any in Wiltshire. Roundway was itself the scene of the defeat of Sir William Waller in 1643 by Lord Wilmot. This occurred in the disastrous Royalist retreat from Lansdowne. Waller was pressing them all the time, and when they got into Devizes he laid siege to the town, but had been repulsed more than once when Lord Wilmot appeared with 1,500 horse. Waller withdrew upon Roundway Hill, but soon descended. Then taken both in front and rear he fled while his force surrendered. So the Royalists called the place Runaway, not Roundway.

In the vale immediately beneath Roundway lies the village of Rowde, which is perhaps worth a visit not only on account of its own old-fashioned sweetness but for its curious inn. The church, however, is, save the Perpendicular tower, no longer old.

To the north of Devizes just off the Marlborough road stands the village of Bishops Cannings. Of old this formed one perhaps royal estate with All Cannings, of which I shall speak later, but an early grant assigned Bishops Cannings to the Bishops of Ramsbury, and with them it remained, as its name tells us. As we might expect the church here is a very beautiful work. It is a cruciform building of the Early English time, having a central tower of two storeys, but the aisles, the clerestory and roof of the nave are Perpendicular additions. You may go far in Wiltshire before you see lovelier triple lancets than you find here in the chancel in the west wall of the nave and in the transepts. The nave is of four bays having low thick columns of the early thirteenth century. Both the long chancel and the south porch are vaulted in stone. North-east of the chancel is a small sacristy with a room over of the early part of the thirteenth century. Attached to the south transept is a chantry chapel dedicated in honour of Our Lady of the Bower, but since 1563 known as the Ernle Chapel, and it contains the monument of Michael Ernle (1571). In the south transept is a curious chair, thought to be that of the keeper of the shrine, while he watched. It seems doubtful, however if there was a shrine here.

Aubrey tells us that in his day this parish was very musical; he asserts that it would have challenged all England for music,



Bishops Cannings Church.

football, and singing. Certainly it boasted a musical vicar in that George Ferraby who here entertained James I. and Anne of Denmark on their way to Bath in April, 1613. They were received at the Bush, Coatfield, and the vicar appeared dressed

as an ancient bard with his choir "in Shepherd's weeds," who sang a four-part song composed by himself "to the great liking and content of the company."

But it is quite on the other side of Devizes on the hills to the north overlooking the Pewsey Vale that we shall find the place which was, as it were, the mother of the town. All Cannings is much older than Devizes and was the most important place in this part of the county when William the Conqueror landed at Pevensey. The church of St. James in Devizes which, for what I know, may be in its foundation the oldest of the town's churches was a chapel of All Saints, All Cannings, and so was St. Andrew's, Etchilhampton. Long before the days of St. Edward, some king of England gave All Cannings to the Abbey of St. Mary, Winchester, and it is probable that the large Norman church which was presently built here replaced a Saxon building. Of the Norman church almost nothing remains, only the south-west and north-west piers of the central tower, their capitals six feet from the ground.

The Norman church seems to have had a north porch added to it in the thirteenth century, and this remains, curiously enough, the fourteenth century nave we see having been built up behind it. In the fifteenth century the Norman transepts were pulled down and new ones built with the lower part of the tower, the south transept as a chantry chapel, the north may be as a Lady Chapel, at least the Angel Gabriel, part of an Annunciation, appears in the glass here.

About 1480 the upper part of the tower was built, and the chapel beyond and open to the south transept was erected probably by Sir Richard Beauchamp, whose arms occur in the parapet. Last of all, the aisles were built in a style inferior to anything else in the church. As for the roofs—that of the south aisle is Jacobean, as is that of the nave (1638), the south porch has a fifteenth century roof. The font has a finely carved oak cover (1633). The chancel was rebuilt in 1867 "as a memorial of a happy home," by the rector, the Rev. J. A. Methuen, and his sons. He was a friend of Coleridge, who visited him here in 1817. In the south aisle there is the good Elizabethan monument of Walter Ernle (1584); another dated 1634 to Sir John Ernle is in the north aisle. The manor house is so modernised as scarcely to be worth seeing.

If St. James's, Devizes, was but a chapel of All Cannings, so

was St. Anne of Etchilhampton, which lies southward across the fields. But here only the nave is old, and the whole church is very simple and small, really a chapel. This nave is of the end of the fourteenth century, and it still retains a good west window of that time. The font suggests that a church of Transitional Norman date once stood here. The church would, however, scarce be worth the trouble of the journey if it were not for two treasures it contains. Here is preserved a remarkable relief of the Archangel Gabriel, part of an Annunciation of the fourteenth century under a canopy. It is said by Canon Jones that "a mutilated effigy of St. Anne in the act of teaching the Blessed Virgin was taken from a niche over the north doorway of the church" during some repairs now many years ago. This, however, has disappeared. The St. Gabriel remains.

In the new chancel now, but it once stood in the nave, is a very noble altar tomb of about 1400, thought to be the monument of the builders of the fourteenth century church. On the *mensa* are the recumbent effigies of a knight and a lady, the knight in plate armour but without arms. It is thought that this is the tomb of one of the Malwyns, who was lord of the manor in 1400, and his wife.

Upon the lower hills under the high downs to the east of All Cannings, where in 1812 Mr. Pile of the Manor Farm cut the biggest of the Wiltshire White Horses, lie two villages that are indeed twins—Alton Barnes and Alton Priors. They lie there on the hills looking over the great beauty of the vale of Pewsey to the escarpment of the Plain, and might seem to have nothing particularly attractive about them, and yet both have interesting churches, and the rectory of Alton Barnes was the scene of *Memorials of a Quiet Life*, and the home of its author. A few hours in the place will convince you that that delightful if old-fashioned book could have been written nowhere else.

Alton is very old: it appears in Domesday Book as Awltown, and got its name of Barnes or Berners, not, as the Memorials curiously assert, from St. Bernard—who loved the valleys, not the hills—but from the family of that name. It was presently purchased by William of Wykeham, who gave it to his New College in Oxford, which is still the patron of the living, and all the connection it ever had with any monastic institution had nothing to do with Clairvaux but with Hyde Abbey, which had

a Priory close by, the church of which at Alton Priors still in some sort remains.

The church of St. Mary at Alton Barnes is smaller than that at Alton Priors, but certainly not less venerable. It consists of nave and chancel only, without even a porch, and the nave is but twenty-five feet long and fifteen feet broad, but all its walls are Saxon work, with the long and short quoins all the way up. The north and south walls are divided into three bays by pilasters of freestone about a foot wide, and there is a single similar pilaster in the western wall. Unfortunately, no windows or doors of this time remain, the present blocked north doorway being of the fourteenth century, while that on the south is, perhaps, of the seventeenth. The chancel, alas! was rebuilt in 1748.

The church of All Saints at Alton Priors is larger and has a tower. It is in a poor state. For the most part it seems to be a Perpendicular building, but the chancel here too has been rebuilt. It is curious that both here and at Alton Barnes the chancel arch has been modernised. On the north is an altar tomb of 1590 with a brass of William Button with this inscription :—

> This was But One though taking roome for three
> Religion, Wisdome, Hospitalitie;
> But since Heaven gate to enter by is straight
> His Fleashes burden heere he left to waite
> Til ye last Trompe blowe open ye wide gate
> To give it entrance to ye Sowle its mate.

Here in the rectory house of Alton, Augustus Hare and his devoted wife Maria Leycester lived from 1829 to 1833. The living of Alton Barnes was, as I have said, a College living. Hare was appointed to it on June 2, 1829, and there, isolated over the Pewsey vale between the lonely downs and the lonelier Plain, he spent the last four years of his short life, a father and a friend to his people. The rectory at Alton Barnes is an old eighteenth century house not much changed since his day. "It is of red brick," we read, "and the door in the middle with little windows on each side; but then it has the tint of old age; the front is nearly covered with clematis and jessamine, and the little green sloping terrace and shrubs and trees round it though rather confined give a look of quiet and retirement. The inside was very comfortable as to the number of rooms,

but the size being fourteen or fifteen feet square and low, seemed very confined . . . ." So wrote Mrs. Hare. It was in this house those "memorials" were lived, it was in this house the Alton Sermons once so beloved were written. The author, that unassuming country parson who had a sort of genius for quietness and divine affection, lies with Keats at the foot of the pyramid of Cestius in Rome, where he died in 1834.

The Pewsey Vale, a golden valley indeed, which divides the barren uplands of the Marlborough Downs from the immense loneliness of Salisbury Plain, is, I suppose, one of the most fruitful valleys in Wiltshire; it is, indeed, the uppermost valley of the Salisbury Avon, of those two streams which, coming one from the east and the other from the west, are united above Upavon and descend together into that funnel of the Plain we call the vale of the Avon. The vale of Pewsey is an enclosed vale; it is everywhere and upon all sides surrounded by the steep escarpments of the chalk; only towards the west between Urchfont and Etchilhampton is there any exit from it, and that is so high that it is in itself a watershed, to the west of it the waters that rise upon it flow into the Severn Sea to the east into the English Channel. Moreover, the Pewsey Vale may be said to be the division between the two fundamental parts of the county, North Wilts and South, whose actual frontiers are the Kennet and the lower valley of the western Avon, and the canal which joins them.

No one, I think, can ever have looked upon this valley enclosed without conceiving a deep affection for it. Standing amid the lonely sheep walks, the bare uplands of the Downs and the Plain, suddenly there our eyes are filled with plenteousness. A host of villages greet the wayfarer, steading after steading stands along the streams, surrounded by harvests, and church tower beyond church tower praises the goodness of God and stands up before Him still for our souls. In the home meads the cattle are knee deep in the grass, here are songs and the voices of our brothers and all these together break the inhumanity and the silence of the Downs and the Plain, that they may never be one or put their yoke upon us. In the Pewsey vale we see as in a vision a better England than our own; we seem to look upon our youth and for a time to forget the torture of the industrial cities. It is, too, in itself a promise for the future.

So thought I on a certain summer morning early, as I stood gazing over all that beauty and riches from Alton, and when I had had my fill of it I went down into the very midst of it to find Beechingstoke.

Beechingstoke, or Bychyngstoke, is a tiny village in the very midst of the vale. It boasts a small fourteenth century church, dedicated in honour of St. Stephen, but of no great interest. Far better are the churches to the south, Marden and Chirton.

The church of All Saints at Marden was originally a Norman one of the time of the great Bishop Roger, but of this building only the south doorway restored in the fifteenth century and the chancel arch remain. The doorway, though it has been tampered with, is a fine one, enriched with chevron mouldings and having a square lintel. It is unfortunate that the tympanum has no sculpture. The whole church was rebuilt in the fifteenth century, and of this work, the nave and tower remain, the chancel having been entirely rebuilt in modern times. Two windows in the nave, though they have lost their tracery, date also from this time, as do the curious roof and the sculptured corbels. The tower is a fine one and originally dated from about 1460, but it fell into decay, and Mr. Ponting was compelled to rebuild the whole of it. He tells us that he took down "the entire structure and rebuilt stone for stone, each being marked, and a plan of the joints made to ensure its being replaced in the position in which we found it. At the same time the western bay of the nave roof was restored."

It is of the church of St. John Baptist at Chirton, or Cherington, as I suppose it should be, that we have quite the most notable work in all this region. It consists of nave and aisles with south door, chancel and western tower. The nave is a genuine and complete work of the latter part of the twelfth century, about 1170, with a contemporary roof, an almost unique thing, I suppose. The pillars of the arcade are round with square capitals, the carving of which gives us the key to the date of the work, for it is not Norman but Transitional. The south doorway is of the same date and style, though restored in the fourteenth century. It is carved with various subjects, deers' heads, birds, animals, human heads and hands, and so forth. But it is in the font we find at once the most remarkable and the most precious relic in the church. It is

of the same date as the nave, a magnificent work of that time. Circular in shape and larger at the top than at the bottom, it is surrounded by a beautiful arcade of twelve arches in which are carved figures of the Twelve Apostles, all of whom hold books save St. Peter, who also grasps a key and I think St. Bartholomew, who holds what I take to be his skin, for he was flayed alive, folded over both his hands. The font at Avebury is of the same date as this work, but cannot compare with it for beauty, I think.

The chancel and aisles at Chirton have been rebuilt; but the three-light east window in the former remains of the fourteenth century, when the chancel we see was originally erected. The tower is the usual Perpendicular tower but the pinnacles are modern. In the north aisle is a monument to the Warrender family.

Leaving Chirton, I went on by the byways through Wilsford, where I could not get into the church, which seemed to be interesting and not without Norman remains, and so through North Newton to the Manningfords, thus leaving the western branch of the uppermost Avon for the eastern.

The church of Manningford Bohun, the first of these villages, was built in our fathers' time by the Rev. G. E. Howman Little, master of St. Nicholas Hospital, Salisbury, who died in 1878. Very different is the church I found in the neighbouring village of Manningford Bruce; for here, as at Bradford-on-Avon, the only other place in the county to boast such a thing, is a complete pre-Conquest church of incomparable interest, for it has a semi-circular apse.

As late certainly as 1201 this parish was known as Manningford St. Peter, for such is the dedication of its church; but in the fourteenth century it was given the name of its lords, the family of Brewose, who then held the manor. The village is pretty enough, but it is the church which calls for our enthusiasm. As I say, it is only comparable with that of St. Lawrence at Bradford-on-Avon, but it is certainly not so early as that. It consists of a nave and apsed chancel divided by a coeval chancel arch that is really an arch, and not as at Bradford a sort of doorway. One might even go further with Dr. Baron and emphasise the fact that the church here in truth consists of three parts—nave, choir and sanctuary, or, as he prefers to say, bema, choros and naos—but that such a division may seem pedantic,

However, it does seem probable that the " chancel " was divided at the chord of the apse into two parts from north to south, that to the west being the sanctuary, that to the east the choir. The altar in this case would have stood between the two windows there, north and south, and it is curious and perhaps significant that these are placed each of them three-fourths on the circular part and one-fourth on the straight sides of the " chancel." One also notes the position of the credence, in the straight of the north wall and the aumbry opposite.

But the main thing about this chancel, apart from the fact that like the rest of the church its walls of flint stand to-day as firm and solid as when first built, is that the apse is blind; there is no east window at all. This is also the case with the apsidal church of Swyncombe in Oxfordshire, and it is asserted that there " a large archaic painting of our Lord between two angels " was found which had filled the space. Doubtless it was so here too.

The fewness of the windows and their position as well as their form, point perhaps to the constant danger of sudden attack. The wide splays on the inside, the small rebates without, possibly for shutters, emphasise this. Besides the two in the chancel there is a similar one to the north wall of the nave, and there was once another opposite this till it was destroyed by the insertion of a two-light window in the fifteenth century. There was probably another at the west end, but this was destroyed in the fourteenth century when the three-light window we see was inserted. The two-light window in the chancel is an addition of the same century. The church has been carefully conserved and repaired and the modern roofs are excellent work. On the north wall of the chancel is a mural tablet with a curious coat having a canton of England. This is the coat of Mary Nicholas, daughter of Thomas Lane. She helped to save the life of Charles II. after Worcester, and " that the memory of this extraordinary service might be continued to posterity the family (of Lane) was dignified with the addition of this signall badge of honour; the armes of England in a canton."

What is the date of this building? It is difficult to say. Dr. Baron and Mr. Ponting claim it for the tenth century; personally, I do not believe it to be earlier than the reign of St. Edward. In my view, it is not a Saxon building. I am convinced that the English at that time were incapable of building

such a church, and that we owe this to Norman art and craftsmanship. Even though the church at Bradford could be proved to be a work of Saxon art, it would not affect this apsidal building; the apse being a most un-Saxon, as it was an un-English form, and that because it was too difficult. Consider again the chancel arch; it is an arch far more developed than anything at Bradford. And then if this be a Saxon work, where is the very characteristic long and short work in the quoins? The only serious fact which points to the church being early is the absence of the buttress. I do not wish to minimise it: let it be asserted for all it is worth. But if the Saxons were able to build us such a place as this, a church apsidal too, which has stood for near a thousand years, what has become of their works up and down England? The Normans we know; all Europe bears witness to their achievements as builders and conquerors and founders of states. But the Saxons? They were barbarians; incapable of anything, even of defending our island; if they built at all it was as the carpenter builds in wood, or as the peasant builds with wattles and mud. Their architecture is as mythical as their art, and no man can find pleasure in either, for they never existed.

Beyond Manningford Bruce, beside the Avon, lies Manningford Abbots or Abbey. It gets its name from the fact that the manor belonged to the Abbot of Hyde. The church here was rebuilt by the Rev. Edward Everett (d. 1895) in 1862–3. It still possesses, however, a very pretty pre-Reformation chalice, possibly of the fifteenth century date. It is of silver parcel gilt; the sides are almost straight, the knot has open work and lions' heads, whilst the foot, which is now round, has, it is said, been hammered out of the original mullet or star base. The engraving of the Crucifix is still just visible. There are also some mural heraldic tablets to the Astleys in the church.

I went on from Manningford Abbots across the Avon to Pewsey, the small capital of all this vale. It is a pleasant little place caught in by the downs and boasts a curious and interesting church with a Transitional Norman nave with thirteenth century chancel and Perpendicular tower and aisles. The arcades of the nave are very rude, but the chancel is not without charm, and boasts sedilia and piscina. In the south aisle is a squint and an aumbry and piscina. The church is dedicated in honour of St. John Baptist, and the manor belonged to the Abbot of

Hyde. But the most interesting thing here is the roof of the organ chamber and vestry. This at one time formed part of the fine refectory roof of Ivychurch Priory. It will be remembered [1] that at the dissolution the land and buildings of the Augustinian Priory of Ivychurch came to the Dean and Chapter of Sarum, who subsequently leased the property to Henry Earl of Pembroke. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the place was bought by the Earl of Radnor, who first allowed the buildings to be converted into a school, and then had them pulled down, a most vandal act, with the exception of part of the church. In 1888 some of the oak timbers of the old refectory were given like so much timber to the rector of Pewsey, who roofed his vestry and organ chamber with them.

Pewsey church is indeed a museum of unconsidered trifles put to practical uses. The communion rails were carved from the timbers of the *San Josef* which Nelson took at Cape St. Vincent in 1797. The rest of the woodwork, however, except the reredos, is the work of Street.

I came into Pewsey early in the afternoon, for I had slept overnight at Manningford, and so there was time enough and to spare for me to climb up out of the true vale eastward on to the hills and for Cobbett's sake, but not for his sake only, to visit Milton Lilbourne and Easton Royal.

Milton Lilbourne under its strange barrows has a little stone church that has been so much restored as to be less interesting than one had hoped, but that restoration brought to light as though in compensation the tomb of the founder in the north aisle.

Easton Royal is further in the hills, and at the very sources of this eastern branch of the uppermost Avon. Its church, however, which it owes to the Earl of Hertford at the end of the sixteenth century, is scarce worth a visit; but here was of old a medieval foundation, and it was part of the pleasure of my visit and the reason of my journey to discover if I could find a trace of it.

This house was the Hospital or Priory of Holy Trinity, founded for the redemption of captives in 1246 by Stephen Archdeacon of Sarum. The church of the Priory was destroyed at the dissolution when all came to the inevitable Seymour, and that is why we have a sixteenth century church in Easton to-day.

[1] See *supra*, p. 93.

It was served by the Trinitarians, and so far as I could see not a stone remained.

I have said I came to Milton and to Easton there at the end of the day not only to look for remains of that little Priory for the redemption of captives, but also for Cobbett's sake, who, in a more brutal way than the friars, was bent on much the same business.

It was one morning in August that he came over the downs here by Milton Hill farm and gazed with huge delight upon this "land of promise," the vale of Pewsey. A shepherd, he tells us, showed him the way towards Milton, "and at the end of about a mile," he writes, "from the top of a very high part of the down with a steep slope towards the valley I first saw this vale . . . and a most beautiful sight it was! Villages, hamlets large farms, towers, steeples, fields, meadows, orchards, and very fine timber trees, scattered over the valley. The shape of the thing is this: on each side downs, very lofty and steep in some places, and sloping miles back in other places; but on each out side of the valley are downs. From the edge of the downs begin capital arable fields generally of very great dimensions, and in some places running a mile or two back into little cross valleys formed by hills of downs. After the cornfields came the meadows on each side down to the brook or river. The farm houses, mansions, villages and hamlets are generally situated in that of the arable land which comes nearest to the meadows. . . ."

Well might he call this the land of promise.

CHAPTER XVII

SAVERNAKE FOREST AND ITS VILLAGES

Easton Royal lies just within the old limits of the forest of Savernake, that marvellously lovely woodland which even to-day, though, of course, disafforested and indeed freely open to all, contains not fewer than 4,000 acres, and is some sixteen miles in circumference.

There is, I think, nothing in southern England quite like Savernake; here is the most ancient home of the greenwood, and there it still finds sanctuary. Far less extensive than the New Forest, it is in comparison with that wild and various region like a jewel to an ocean, for it is all precious and wholly without the barren *longeurs* of the Conqueror's domain. Here is a forest in the common acceptation of the word and nothing else, mile after mile of ancient British woodland with many a tree which must have seen the loot of the monasteries and the foundering of medieval England, and with more than one which may well have heard the horns of Duke William and given shade to the huntsmen of Harold Godwinson. Of all the forests of South England this is the most beautiful, and of all the forests of Wiltshire which is quite embattled with them this is the king. The Ash, Oak and Thorn of our earliest forefathers flourish here as perhaps nowhere else, for it is among their more ancient homes; here too the Beeches stand in their long cathedral aisles populous in spring at least with chorister birds and the organ voice of the west wind soughing among their leafy vaults and clean branches. And if the oaks of Savernake are among the most famous in England: the King Oak, the Queen Oak, above all the Duke's Vaunt that was wonderful in beauty and antiquity when Protector Somerset dreamed beneath its shade, the Creeping Oak with its vast limb stretched along the

ground, what in all England or the world either may compare with the nave of beeches four miles long which with all its alley-ways makes of the whole forest a many-aisled minster? It is as though here Nature herself had raised up a rival to Stonehenge in a sanctuary at least as old and still perfect in beauty.

> The Plain the forests doth disdain
> The forests rail upon the Plain.

So Drayton says of "shadeful Savernake."

A quaint old writer upon forest law, Manwood, declares that "It doth appear by sundry ancient Histories, as in the 'Concordantia Historiarum' and others, that forests have been alwaies in this realm from the first time that the same was inhabited. And also you may read there that Gurgentius the son of Belinus being a king of the land did make certain forests for his delight and pleasure in Wiltshire." Is it only a coincidence that in the Perambulation of Savernake in 1300 among the boundary marks occurs the name of Bellin-gate, now known as Bell-moor? However that may be, Savernake is of a vast antiquity—we have no record of its formation any more than we have of Selwood or Exmoor or any other of the English forests save only that of Windsor and the New Forest. They are, as the old verderer asserted, "as ould as the world." Doubtless Savernake when it first became a Royal Forest administered by the forest law was not much larger than it is to-day; that is to say, roughly it may be said to have filled the triangle formed by the Kennet valley, the Andover road and the railway, having its apex at Marlborough: but the Norman and the Plantagenet kings enlarged it greatly, and when Edward I. caused the forests of his kingdom to be perambulated it appears that the forest of Savernake then included a district of every variety of country in the hands of a multitude of owners, comprising not only woodland and downland, but arable and pasture, open woods, and enclosed parks between the Ridge Way on the west between Alton Priors and East Kennet to beyond Hungerford on the east, and from north to south all the way from Marlborough to the Collingbournes. This was Savernake at its greatest. It seems then to have been divided into three Bailies, the bailiffs of which were all subject to the Warden. According to Canon Jackson, the Eastwick Baily reached from Workway Hill on the west of the forest to a spot called Braden: the

West Baily included Savernake proper, the Brails and Haredon, now called Hardings ; the Hippingscombe Baily lay to the south towards Chute Forest and included part of it. Within this vast territory licences were granted by the Crown to various proprietors, among them to the following ecclesiastics : the Prior of Marlborough had rights of feeding for oxen and cows within the Forest ; the Abbot of Hyde had the same ; the Bishop of Sarum had a chase for wolves and hares at Stitchcomb ; the Prior of Ogbourne had a similar right.

It is curious that the name of Savernake does not occur in Domesday Book, though it appears as early as 933 in a deed of gift to the Abbey of Wilton ; it is there written Safernoc. But if the name of the forest is absent from the great Norman Survey the name of the Warden is not. The hereditary wardens were the Sturmy family, and in Domesday Book Richard Sturmy is recorded as holding land at Burbage, Harden, Shalbourne and Huish. When the original grant of the Wardenship of Savernake was made to this family we do not know, but it was confirmed by King John, who also made Thomas Esturmy a knight. The Sturmys continued as wardens and principal holders until 1426, when the last male of the family, Sir William Sturmy, died. His only daughter married Roger Seymour of Hatch Beauchamp in Somerset, and so here, too, and earlier than usual, the Seymours crept in.

Now the chief house of the Wardens, that is to say of the Sturmys, had been Wolfhall, now, alas ! no more. All that is left there is a little red-brick house on a rising ground on the top of which is an old farm house and large barn. Wolfhall, or better Wulfhall, for it appears in the Wiltshire Domesday as Ulfela, stood between the little red-brick house and the farm, and in the fifteenth century it was about a mile outside the forest and commanded a fine view of it. It is perhaps three miles by road to the north-east of Easton Royal. The Seymours came into possession of it, as I say, in 1426 ; but we know little or nothing of the place until the next century, when Sir John Seymour of Wulfhall, who had married a Wentworth, had three children born to him there, Jane, who was to be one of Henry VIII.'s queens and the mother of Edward VI., Edward the Protector Somerset, and Thomas Lord Sudeley, who married Katherine Parr, Henry VIII.'s widow. The manor at that time included three parks, Suddene,

Horse Park, and a Red Deer Park, and about the old house, a half-timber mansion, were many gardens, among them the Great Paled Garden, My Old Lady's Garden and My Young Lady's Garden; there was also a kennel of hounds. In that fair old English domain in sight of the forest, that amazing family grew up.

In 1536, the year of her father's death, Jane Seymour was married at Wulfhall to the King, and it was in the barn, a part of which we may still see at the farm, that the wedding feast was spread. Jane escaped the usual fate of Henry's Queens by dying a natural death after the birth of her son in 1537. She was genuinely mourned by the people and it is said by Henry, and we may believe that she was a woman of piety and worth, for Luther called her "an enemy of the Gospel." In August, 1539, the King, still a widower, came down with his whole Court to Wulfhall on a visit to Edward Seymour the late Queen's brother, then Earl of Hertford and afterwards the Protector Somerset. Again he was feasted in the old barn from Saturday, August 9th, 1539, to Tuesday, August 12th; two hundred people were entertained there every day, though as it appears not altogether at the expense of Edward Seymour. Once more, four years before his death, in 1543, the King came to Wulfhall. By then Edward Seymour had acquired a much larger Wiltshire property owing to the dissolution of the monasteries. Besides Wulfhall, he had houses at Easton Priory and Tottenham, in or on the verge of the forest, and he intended to rebuild Wulfhall. Perhaps the project was stopped by his execution, at any rate it was not carried out. The old house remained, though apparently injured in the Civil War, till after the Restoration, when it was largely destroyed to build a new Tottenham house, where Savernake House now stands in the park to the south-east of the forest. Ultimately Savernake and the rest passed by marriage from the Seymours to the Bruces and so to the present owner, the Marquis of Ailesbury, whose mansion, the present Tottenham House, was begun in 1781 by the first Earl of Ailesbury. It possesses some noble pictures and the ivory horn mounted in silver and curiously carved with subjects of the chase which belonged to the hereditary warden of the forest. The Ailesbury column between the park and the forest was erected by the first earl to commemorate the recovery of George III. from madness.

Whole weeks are not enough to explore all the beauties of Savernake, for a man there becomes a tree worshipper and every glade has its shrine. But when at last you have had your fill of the greenwood, and I know not well when that will be, nor which of the four seasons is loveliest here or most full of enchantment, presently you will begin to discover that there are more shrines than those of nature's building even here.

To the north of Easton Royal and Wulfhall, in the valley of that tributary of the Kennet which now holds the Kennet and Avon canal on the eastern verge of Savernake, stands the little town of Great Bedwyn, "a poor thing to syghte," as Leland says, but for all that there was a Roman villa [1] here, the pavements and large lead cistern of which have been found, and in the Saxon days it was a place of some importance, the residence of Cissa, Ealdorman of Berks and Wiltshire. In 675, a battle was fought here between Wessex and Mercia, and Wulfhere of Mercia was victorious. Who knows that we have not here the origin of that curious name Wulfhall? Bedwyn is still a market town and until 1832 it returned two members to Parliament, and among them was one Selden the antiquary (1625–6).

But the great thing in Great Bedwyn is its church. Perhaps, who knows? a Roman church stood here, but we may be sure that a Saxon church did, for Domesday Book tells us that a priest held the church of Bedvynde and there was a prebend of Bedwyn in the cathedral of Old Sarum. The place was of importance till almost our own time, and in the Middle Age the church of St. Mary had five chapels dependent upon it; St. Nicholas at Grafton opposite the new church, among whose foundations in 1846 a beautiful fifteenth century Pax, now in the Devizes museum, was found; St. Martin at Chisbury, a chapel at Knoyle, the present parish church of Little Bedwyn and a chapel at Marten.

No trace of Saxon work remains in the present church, which is in its earlier parts a Transitional Norman building, cruciform, consisting of nave of four bays, aisles, north and south transepts and chancel with a tower over the crossing.

[1] This villa was served by the Roman road which ran straight down the grand avenue of Savernake between Cirencester and Winchester, which crossed the valley of the Kennet at Cunetio (Mildhenhall), and the smaller valley in which Great Bedwyn lies to the east of the forest at Crofton.

It is possible that the Saxon church, as Mr. Ponting supposes, was of wood. At any rate in the twelfth century a stone church was erected *de novo* of which the very beautiful nave remains to us. There is not in all Wiltshire a finer specimen of the Transitional Norman than the arcades here with their rich and variously carved capitals and pointed arches.

In the middle of the thirteenth century the Transitional Norman chancel was splendidly rebuilt as we see it. It is a remarkable work, divided by buttresses into two wide and one narrow bay; each wide bay having two single-light windows on each side, and the narrow bay one similar window on each side but low down; perfect specimens, Mr. Ponting tells us, of the "sanctus" window. On the south is a priest's door, and there, too, is an exquisitely sculptured piscina. The whole is in the Transition style from Early English to Decorated. The east window, alas! is modern.

The tower and transepts are of the first half of the fourteenth century. They seem to have been built as a memorial of Sir Adam de Stokke, "Lord of Stokke Hall hereby," who died in early manhood in 1313, by his son, Sir Roger. Both are buried in a recessed tomb of two bays in the south transept, where also there is a beautiful piscina, but not in its right position. In the east bay of this tomb is the effigy of a cross-legged knight wearing chain mail; this is Sir Adam. In the west bay, the back of which is traceried is a slab of purbeck with the matrix of a brass cross and an inscription: ROGER . DE . STOCKE . CHEV . ICI . GYCHT . DEV . DE . SA . ALME . EYT . MERCI. The whole transept is splendidly built and designed.

In the end of the fourteenth century the north and south aisles were built, and the west front was rebuilt, but this was rebuilt again in 1854. Then in the fifteenth century the clerestory was added to the nave.

Such is the church as we have it. Two or three things remain to be noted. On the west respond of the north arcade of the nave is a late fourteenth century panel with traceried head above a figure of the Blessed Virgin and Child; a lovely thing upon which fragments of colour yet remain. The old rood screen has been destroyed in our own day, but parts of it are used to screen off the west end of the south aisle. There are, too, the tombs of the Seymours. Till 1509 this family laid their dead in the Priory Church of Easton Royal, but when that was

ruinous, as the inscription here tells us, Edward Earl of Hertford removed the body of his grandfather, Sir John Seymour, to Great Bedwyn, and built the altar tomb we see in the chancel with his recumbent effigy. The remains of his father he removed at the same time with the purbeck slab and brass here. There is also a brass to Edward, Lord Beauchamp, 1612.

A mile and a half down the valley northward from Great Bedwyn lies Little Bedwyn, Chisbury Camp standing between them to the west.

Little Bedwyn has a church only less interesting than its mother at Great Bedwyn. It consists of nave with north and south aisles, south porch, chancel and western tower, a church of flints with, wonderful to say, a stone spire, an unique thing in Savernake.

As I have said, the church here, dedicated in honour of St. Michael, was a chapelry of St. Mary, Great Bedwyn, but in 1405 it was freed and made a parish church, and that accounts for much we see here.

The nave was begun before that of St. Mary. The north arcade is Norman, about 1160, according to Mr. Ponting, and consists of three bays of round arches. The south arcade is later, consists of four bays, and the arches are pointed. The capitals are all worth notice, being curiously and variously carved, but they have been badly scraped. The tower arch is very early thirteenth century work, the chancel arch is a little later and much poorer. Of the chancel of this church we know nothing, for after 1405, when the church was freed from St. Mary's and became parochial, a new chancel was built, the tower and spire were erected and the aisles added to the nave.

The chancel has a three-light pointed east window and a two-light and a single-light window on each side. There is a piscina in the south wall. The aisles have north and south doorways ; over the latter, without, is an empty niche. The south aisle boasts a piscina, but not in its right place. Here, too, the roof is of the fifteenth century. Apart from the nave, the most interesting thing in the church is the spire, which is a fine one of stone.

Chisbury Camp lies half a mile west of Little Bedwyn. It consists of an area of about fifteen acres, having partly a triple and partly a double rampart. It is most wonderful to find here built across the line of the inner vallum of the camp an

exquisite and beautiful little chapel, once dedicated in honour of St. Martin. This was dependent upon St. Mary's, Great Bedwyn, but after 1405 it became a free chapel in the parish of Little Bedwyn, and in the possession of the Augustinian priory of St. Denis, near Southampton. A true chapel, the beautiful little building is a simple oblong without even a structural division between nave and sanctuary. It is of flint, and seems to have been built at the end of the thirteenth century. It is therefore Decorated in style and very lovely of its kind; the east window being of two lights with early geometrical tracery, the mullions missing. The arch here was of old supported by purbeck shafts, the fine capitals and bases of which alone remain. There are similar windows on either side, but they had no purbeck. Note these windows in their beauty; they belong to the sanctuary; those in the nave are single-light windows without carving. In Catholic days this chapel was divided, the sanctuary from the nave, by a screen, but that is gone. We are, I suppose, fortunate to find as much as remains here; for time is envious of beauty, and the modern world indifferent both to beauty and holiness.

Not much more than a mile to the north of St. Martin's one comes in a narrow valley on the Hampshire border to the village of Froxfield. Here, too, there is a church of some interest. Dedicated in honour of All Saints, it consists of nave and chancel only, and was built at the end of the twelfth century; the chancel arch is, however, modern. The shape of the building is curious, and may, perhaps, as is commoner in France than in England, seek to represent the attitude of our Lord upon the Cross, though this might seem less likely since the church is not cruciform. At any rate, the north wall of the nave is longer than the south, the west wall is not at right angles to either, and the chancel markedly inclines to the north even as Christ turned towards His Mother. The east wall of the chancel is curious, for it has two single-light windows five feet apart. Probably a picture filled the space between. These windows are round-headed, but the interior arches are inclined to be pointed. The two single-light windows in the south wall and that in the north wall are pointed. There is a thirteenth century window in the north wall of the nave, and a two-light fourteenth century window in the south wall. The three-light window at the west end is of the fifteenth century. The north and south door-

ways (but not the porch, which is modern) and the font are of the end of the twelfth century.



Froxfield Almshouse.

Froxfield is famous, however, not for its church, but for its almshouses, which are in part of the end of the seventeenth

century, the buildings forming a quadrangle with a tiny chapel. The gatehouse is charming. Over it, under the arms of the foundress, is this inscription: "Somerset Almshouses for 30 poor widows founded and enlarged by the right noble Sarah Duchess Dowager of Somerset deceased; built and settled according to the will of the first Duchess by Sir William Gregory bart., one of the Justices of their Majestys' Court of King's Bench, the surviving executor of the sd. Duchess Anno Dom. 1691; and afterwards enlarged for 20 more poor widows Anno Domini 1775; whereby is compleated the will of the noble foundress."

Scarce two miles from Froxfield westward and to the south of the high road is Knoyle Chapel in the old parish of Great Bedwyn. It is a ruin, but what is left is of the end of the thirteenth century, and therefore precious. It is, as is St. Martin's, Chisbury, a proper chapel, but it only now boasts one complete window, in the north wall.

From Froxfield I went on northward, not by the high road through the valley, but by a byway over the downs and in something more than a mile came to Littlecote Park.

Littlecote is one of the most romantic places in Wiltshire, a beautiful early sixteenth century house, one of the best examples left to us in the county of the period. It is embedded in a deep valley in the midst of a park cut into ridings after the sixteenth century pattern and overshadowed by gloomy groves. The manor is an old one, and appears in Domesday Book, but it presently came into the possession of the Dorels or Darrels, in which family it remained for ages till the time of Elizabeth, when, after an appalling tragedy, as at least is generally believed, it came to Sir John Popham, the famous Chief Justice, in whose family it still remains.

The tragedy is thus for the first time explained by Aubrey in his "Memoirs of Judge Popham":—

"Dayrell of Littlecote in Co. Wilts, having gott his lady's waiting-woman with child when her travell came sent a servant with a horse for a midwife whom he was to bring hoodwinked. She was brought and layd the woman, but as the child was borne, she saw the knight take the child and murther it and burn it in the fire in the chamber. She having done her businesse was extraordinarily rewarded for her paines and sent blindfolded away. This horrid action did much run on her mind and

she had a desire to discover it (the house) but knew not where it was. She considered with herself the time that she was riding and how many miles she might have rode at that rate in that time, and that it must be some great person's house for the roome was 12 foot high; and she should know the chamber if she saw it. She went to a Justice of Peace and search was made. The very chamber was found. The knight was brought to his tryall, and to be short this judge (Popham) had this noble house, parke and manor and I thinke more for a bribe to save his (Dayrell's) life."

Such is the story as it is told by the first recorder of the affair before 1697. We hear nothing more of it till in 1813 Sir Walter Scott published "Rokeby," in which we find this ballad, the subject matter of which, the poet tells us, was supplied to him by Lord Webb Seymour :—

"'And whither would you lead me then?'
Quoth the Friar of orders grey.
And the Ruffians twain replied again
'By a dying woman to pray.'

"'I see,' he said, 'a lovely sight,
A sight bodes little harm,
A lady as a lily bright
With an infant on her arm.'

"'Then to thine office Friar grey,
And see thou shrive her free!
Else shall the sprite that parts to-night
Fling all its guilt on thee.

"'Let mass be said, and trentals read
When thou'rt to convent gone
And bid the bell of St. Benedict [1]
Toll out its deepest tone.'

"The shrift is done, the Friar is gone
Blindfolded as he came—
Next morning, all in Littlecot Hall
Were weeping for their dame.

"Wild Darrell is an alter'd man
The village crones can tell
He looks pale as clay and strives to pray
If he hears the convent bell.

[1] What, in the name of St. Francis, the bell of St. Benedict had to do with a *friar* of orders grey, or orders black for that matter, it is now too late to demand of the author.



Littlecote Manor.

"If prince or peer cross Darrell's way
He'll beard him in his pride—
If he meets a Friar of orders grey
He droops and turns aside."

That is a very pretty embroidery upon the tale, leaving so little of the original as supplied by Lord Webb Seymour as to be scarcely recognisable. Indeed, the only possible word of truth in the ballad is, as we shall see, the purely literary reference to a peer.

But Scott's version is innocence itself as compared with that printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1823. The story there told is merely a brutal exaggeration of Aubrey, the atmosphere and colour deepened. Was it this version that Macaulay knew and that caused him to assert that the story is true?

To return now to the source of the tale, Aubrey. He makes three false statements which are demonstrable. Darell was not a knight; he was not married; Popham was not made a judge till three years after Darell's death. The whole story might have been dismissed upon such evidence as a malicious fable but for two or three startling discoveries in recent years.

In the first place documents have been found in the Record Office which bring to light some strange incidents in the career of "Wild Darell." In the second place, we now possess the veritable deposition, in the handwriting of the magistrate who took it, of the old midwife herself. She states that she was fetched by men on horseback by night, carried a long journey to a great house into which she was mysteriously introduced by a gentleman in black velvet who required her to deliver a masked lady lying in a splendid bed, and that he threw the child as soon as it was born into the fire, sending the old woman back again the next night with the same precautions; indeed, in nearly every particular confirming the story Lord Webb Seymour sent to Sir Walter. I say nothing of a letter dated July 24, 1578, written to Darell by his cousin, which seems to show that some serious charge was being made against him. But in a letter from Sir Henry Knyvett to Sir John Thynne discovered by Canon Jackson at Longleat, we have something much more formidable. It is as follows:—

"Syr I besetch you lett me crave so much favor of you as to procure your servant Mr Bonham most effectually to examine his sister tochinge her usage att Willm Dorrell's,

the birth of her children, howe many they were and what became of them. She shall have no cawse off feare trulie to confes the uttermost; for I will defend her from all perill howe so ever the case fall owte. The brute of the murder of one of them increaseth fowlely, and theare falleth owte such other heyghnous matter against him as will toch him to the quick . . . From Charlton this 11th January, 1578.

"Your loving friend,

"H. KNYVETT." [1]

This might seem to settle the matter so far as the root of it goes; namely, that a new-born child was murdered by Darell at Littlecote. We need not, therefore, accept the charge against Sir John Popham as proven. He was not judge at the time, but he was a Queen's Counsel and may have pleaded for Darell. At the same time, it must be said that he was Darell's cousin, and since Darell had no legitimate heir he had only a choice of cousins; he chose Sir John. But in spite of this evidence there are many who deny the whole story. For instance, Mr. Doran Webb, an authority it is impossible to ignore, roundly denies it. He declares that he has not the slightest belief in the traditional tale, and what is more, and intensely interesting, he attributes the whole accusation "to the malevolence of the first Earl of Pembroke, who was by no means scrupulous as to the weapons he used when anything was to be got by their use."

Littlecote House to-day is well worth a visit. The noble hall in which Dutch William dined with King James's Commissioners in 1688, the oak shuffle-board table, the armours and buff coats of the seventeenth century, more probably the uniforms of keepers and retainers than of soldiers, the thumbstocks, Judge Popham's chair and the china, are all worth seeing. Here, too, is a chapel and gallery, and of course the famous rooms. Also here is a needlework copy of the Roman pavement discovered at Littlecote in 1730 and destroyed. There was surely a Roman villa here, and this is not surprising, for Littlecote stands between two known Roman roads; those from Cirencester to Winchester and to Silchester.

[1] *W. & M.* viii. 241. It is a pity Canon Jackson did not print the whole letter. Neither Sir H. Knyvett nor Sir John Thynne are above suspicion. We should like to see the whole letter.

I left Littlecote at last, and made my way down the valley of the Kennet for nearly a mile before I crossed the river to Chilton Foliat.

There is not much to see at Chilton ; but in the Early English church are several monuments of the Pophams, but not that of Sir John. He lies at Wellington in Somerset. Here too in the chancel is the cross-legged effigy of a knight in armour. But the best thing in the church is the beautiful little Jacobean screen. The old font is now to be seen at Southwick.

From Chilton I went west up the left bank of the Kennet for three miles till I came to the little old-fashioned town of Ramsbury that has so long a history and is now so quiet. It is delightfully set on the bank of the stream in that most silent valley and consists for the most part of a single long street of ancient houses, the church standing a little away in a grove of trees.

In was in the year 909 that the vast diocese of Sherborne was divided into four, so that though Sherborne retained its bishop, others were created who ruled parts of the old diocese at Wells, Crediton and Ramsbury. In those Saxon days the name of Ramsbury was Hraefnesbyrig, which in English is Ravensbury, not Ramsbury, a vulgar corruption, and indeed its bishops knew themselves as "Episcopi Corvinensis Ecclesiae." Their diocese included Wiltshire and Berkshire. In the year 1045 Herman, chaplain of St. Edward, was appointed bishop, but his ambition was not content, for Ramsbury was only a small place without the riches or the society either of a monastery or a court, and its small cathedral church was apparently without any permanent body of canons or monks to serve it. He desired to remove his see to the great Abbey of Malmesbury, and when he was denied, sulked in exile. In 1058, however, he was appointed Bishop of Sherborne and was allowed to hold it with his first see of Ramsbury and for seventeen years he lived at Sherborne and administered his two dioceses. Then in 1075, soon after the Conquest—that is, when all England was made new and so much that was rotten in her was cut away—these two sees were really united, not merely under one bishop, but in one bishopric, and the see was set up in Old Sarum.

Of the cathedral church of Ramsbury we know almost nothing. When in our own time the present Early English

church was restored, the foundations of a Saxon church were exposed parallel with the present building, and some admirable



Ramsbury Manor

sculptured stones were found in good preservation, which are now set up on a raised platform at the west end of the

north aisle of the present church. These seem to be the shafts of crosses, two being body stones. According to the Bishop of Bristol (Rt. Rev. G. F. Browne, D.D.), the crosses probably stood without the old church at the head and foot of the recumbent body stones. That such stones were in use as early as 685 we know from William of Malmesbury, who speaks of a burial of that date outside the abbey of Glastonbury under a pyramid or cross shaft "nobiliter insculptae."

Of the present church lately restored at great cost there is not much to say. It is mainly Early English and Perpendicular. The nave roof is a fine one of the latter date, and there is a good canopied tomb to William de St. John with French inscription in the chancel (thirteenth century). But the Darell chapel to the north of the chancel has been turned into a vestry. There is a tomb of purbeck to William Darell of the time of Richard II., and others of the family lie there, including, I think, "Wild Darell."

The Manor House lies a mile further up the valley in a most noble park, in which the Kennet has been expanded into a lake. During the sixteenth and down to the middle of the seventeenth century that manor belonged to the Pembrokes. It was "a fine square stone house—a brave seate tho' not comparable to Wilton." In 1676 the seventh earl sold Ramsbury Manor to Sir William Jones, the Attorney-General. He employed John Webb the pupil of Inigo Jones to build the house we see, a very charming specimen of the English as opposed to the Italian style of that time. The fine gates are also of the same date and from the same hand, but the lodges are later.

From this noble old house I made my way to Marlborough, for it was already evening. Yet I stayed a little on the way up the valley to look at Axford Chapel, now a farm house. What is left is of the fourteenth century, the priest's door and five perfect windows still remain in the walls, and the old roof, I am told, is only hidden by a plaster ceiling. The chapel was disused in the sixteenth century when so much else was destroyed. In those days there was a manor house close to the chapel belonging to the Pyles. It was there the western rising was decided upon that cost Penruddocke and so many others their lives. Indeed, of the leaders only Sir Gabriel Pyle and his brother escaped with their lives.

It was quite dark when I got into Marlborough.

CHAPTER XVIII

MARLBOROUGH AND DISTRICT

Marlborough is a quiet old-fashioned town of considerable dignity and charm in the upper valley of the Kennet surrounded on all sides by the downs. It is a place of great antiquity, but this does not appear, or hardly, in its houses or churches, owing to the many fires which have devastated it, especially that of April 28, 1653. It stands right upon the famous Bath road, and this in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries lent it a considerable importance which it lost with the advent of the railway, for that took the main route to the west far to the north. It never had much trade beyond brewing, tanning, malting, and wool stapling, and would seem to owe all or almost all its present importance and power to the establishment here of a great public school, Marlborough College, founded in 1843. The town consists for the most part of a single wide street, the High Street, the older houses in which, mostly on the north side, date from the end of the seventeenth century. Evelyn was in Marlborough in 1654, that is to say, in the year following the most disastrous of the many fires, and he notes that it was "now new built." In 1668 Pepys was there and describes it as "a pretty fair town for a street or two—on one side the pent houses supported with pillars which make a fair work." These pent houses supported with pillars remain, and give the High Street indeed most of its character. But the town Evelyn and Pepys saw differed very much from that Leland visited in the sixteenth century, and for that we must blame the fires.

"The toune of *Marlebyri*," says Leland, "standyth in lengthe from the toppe of an hill flat east to a valley lyinge flat weste. The chefe parish church of the toune standythe at the very weste end of it beynge dedicate onto *Sent Peter*. By it there

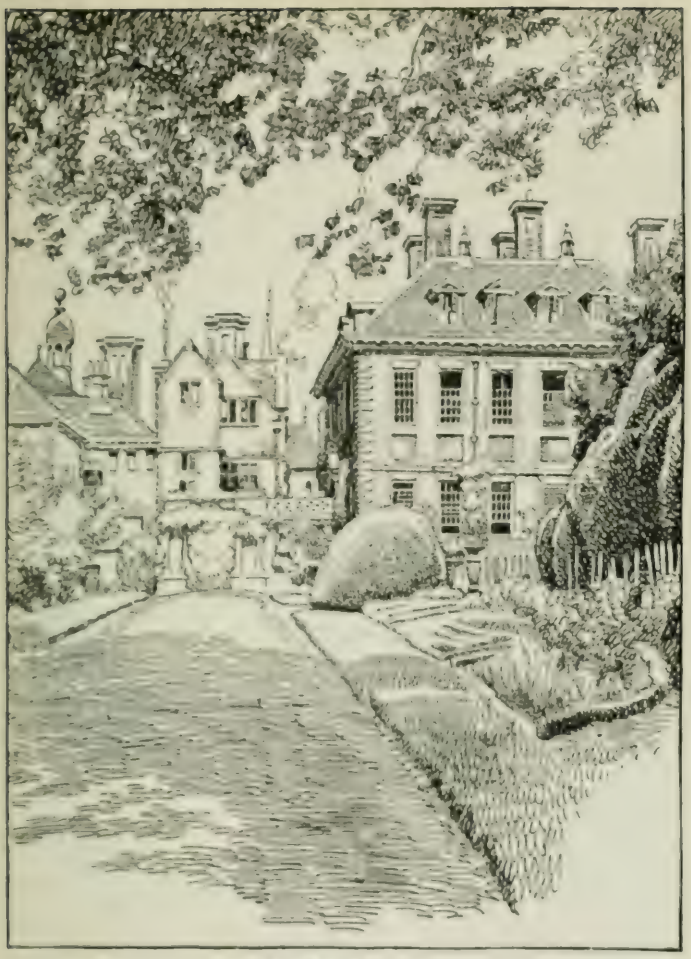
is a ruine of a great castelle harde at the west end of the toun, whereof the doungeon towre partly (half) yet stondith. There lay Kynge *Edward* . . . at a Parliament tyme.[1] There is a chappel of *St. Martyne* at the entre at the est ende of the toune. There is a paroche church of Our Ladie (*St. Marie's*) in the mydle of the toune ; by the Market place. The body of this church is an auncient peace of worke. Sum fable without authority that *S. Marie's* was a nunerye. There was a priorye of white chanons caullyd *S. Margaret's* a little, half a quarter of a mile, by southe out of the toune over *Kenet* on the right hand where now dwelleth one Master *Daniell*. There was a house of friers in the south side of the toune. . . ."

Of all this not much more than the restored churches of St. Peter and St. Mary remain.

Indeed the antiquity of Marlborough is not to be demonstrated in the buildings one sees to-day, but of that antiquity there can be no doubt. Its very name for ages connected it with Merlin, who was supposed to have been buried under the Castle Mound chiefly because of the old name Merlebergh, and though this cannot be accepted, the true derivation connecting it with Maer or Mere, a boundary, Maerleah, a cattle boundary perhaps, yet the motto of the town "Tibi nunc sapientis ossa Merlini" accepts the legend, and that the Castle Mound is enormously old, older far than the time of King Arthur, has been fairly well proven by excavation. This huge mound, which stands at the west end of the town, is comparable only with its colossal neighbour Silbury Hill. About seventy years ago it came into the possession of the Council of Marlborough College. In the summer of 1912, in the course of alterations a part of the base of the mound on the west side was removed, and an excavation was made from base to summit. This revealed among other things several fragments of red-deer antlers thoroughly impregnated with chalk, and it seems impossible that they can have been buried there subsequent to the erection of the mound, which thus would appear to be at the very least as old as Stonehenge.

It is possible that the Romans used this earthwork ; but in any case they had a station at Cunetio by Mildenhall on the Roman road from Cirencester to Winchester, as we shall see, and there was found the Marlborough Bucket and the Rudge Cup.

[1] Rather King Henry III., who here held his last Parliament when the code of laws called the "Statutes of Marlborough" was passed.



Marlborough Grange.

Of Marlborough in Saxon times we know nothing at all, but it would seem certainly to have existed, and perhaps as a strong-

hold, for the Conqueror found or erected some sort of fortress here and imprisoned in it more than one Saxon ecclesiastic; moreover, he set up a mint there. The famous castle, however, would seem to have been built in the first year of the twelfth century by the great Roger of Salisbury, and there Henry I. kept his Easter in 1110. This castle has a long and varied history It was held for Matilda by "the subtle" John Fitz-Gilbert, but Henry II. presently granted it in 1174 to John Lackland, together with the castle of Nottingham and others in France, and there in 1189 on August 29 he married Avice of Gloucester. John spent much time at Marlborough and there established his treasury; but at the end of his reign it was surrendered by Hugh de Neville to Louis of France, but soon delivered up to Henry III., who was as fond of it as his father had been. No doubt the chief attraction of the place was its facilities for hunting, for it stood on the verge of the forest of Savernake and of Aldbourne Chase. A Florentine artist was employed to enlarge and rebuild the castle, and a hundred pounds was borrowed from the Bishop of Sarum to pay him. In 1245 the king's mother died here, and all the poor clerks of Oxford were feasted in the castle on the occasion of the funeral. In 1267 Henry here held his last parliament and the "Statutes of Marlborough" was passed which re-enacted in a more formal fashion the Provisions of Westminster (1259) redeeming the promises whereby the more moderate party had been won over to the royal cause from Simon de Montfort. Upon the death of Henry III. in the following year Marlborough Castle became part of the dowry of his widow, Queen Eleanor, who resided in the nunnery of Amesbury, and on her death was conferred by Edward I. on his own queen. Edward II., however, deprived his mother of it and bestowed it with other vast estates on his favourite, Hugh le Despencer, in 1308. On the fall of the Despencers, Queen Isabel obtained it, and in the reign of Edward III. it was held by various wardens for the king's sister, Queen Joanna of Scotland. Richard II. granted it to Sir William Scrope, whom he made Earl of Wiltshire, and on his execution in 1399 it reverted to the Crown. in the time of Henry V. Sir Matthew Hungerford of Farleigh Castle received the profits of the town and castle of Marlborough, which in the reign of Henry VI. were held by Humphrey Duke of Gloucester. By this time the castle was probably dismantled, at least we know nothing of it during the wars of the Roses save

that Edward IV. "removed straight to Marlborough" on the rising of the Lancastrian forces in the west of England.

There is nothing more to say of the castle till the reign of Edward VI., when the Crown granted it inevitably to the Protector Somerset. The Seymours used it as a residence; and, indeed, only parted with it in 1770, when they sold it to the Marquis of Ailesbury. It seems to have revived, as all such places did, during the Great Rebellion. It was held for the King, but the town was wholly for the Parliament, being, as Clarendon states, "the most notoriously disaffected of Wiltshire" and remarkable for "the obstinacy and malice of the inhabitants." In truth, Wiltshire was full of Nonconformists. The place had this importance that it stood on the Great Western road, and was thus in a position to cut the King's communications with the loyal west. In consequence, the town was stormed and in good part burnt on December 5, 1642, by the Royalists under Wilmot and John Franklyn, the members for the town; several of the chief townsmen and one thousand prisoners were sent to Alford. Clarendon gives the following vivid account of the affair:—

"Though it was December, a season when the King's tired and almost naked soldiers might expect rest, he sent a strong party of horse, foot, and Dragoons under the command of Mr. Wilmot the lieutenant-general of his Horse to visit that town; who coming thither on a Saturday found the place strongly manned; for besides the garrison it being a market day very many country people came thither to buy and sell and were all compell'd to stay and take arms for the defence of the place; which for the most part they were willing to do, and the people peremptory to defend it. Though there was no line about it yet there were some places of great advantage upon which they had raised batteries and planted cannon and so barricaded all the avenues which were through deep narrow lanes, that the horse could do little service. When the lieutenant-general was with his party near the town he apprehended a fellow who confessed upon examination 'that he was a spy sent by the garrison to bring intelligence of their strength and motion.' When all men thought, and the poor fellow himself feared he should be executed, the lieutenant-general caused the whole party to be ranged in order on the next convenient place, and bid the fellow look well upon them and observe them and then

bid him return to the town and tell those that sent him what he had seen and withal that he should acquaint the magistrates of the town 'that they should do well to treat with the garrison to give them leave to submit to the king; that if they did so the town should not receive the least prejudice; but if they compelled him to make his way and enter the town by force it would not be in his power to keep his soldiers from taking that which they should win with their blood; and so dismissed him. This generous act proved of some advantage; for the fellow transported with having his life given him, and the numbers of the men he had seen beside his no experience in such sights being multiplied by his fear made notable relations of the strength, gallantry and resolution of the enemy and of the impossibility of resisting them; which though it prevailed not with those in authority to yield, yet it strangely abated the hopes and courage of the people. So that when the king's soldiers fell in, after a volley or two, in which much execution was done they threw down their arms and ran into the town; so that the foot had time to make room for the horse who were now entered at both ends of the town yet were not so near an end as they expected; for the streets were in many places barricaded which were obstinately defended by some soldiers and townsmen who killed many men out of the windows of the houses; so that it may be if they had trusted only to their own strength without compelling the countrymen to increase their number and who being first frighted and weary, disheartened their companions that place might have cost more blood. Ramsay the Governour was himself retired into the church with some officers and from thence did some hurt; upon this there being so many killed out of windows fire was put to the next houses so that a good part of the town was burn'd and then the soldiers entered doing less execution than could reasonably be expected; but what they spared in blood they took in pillage the soldiers enquiring little who were friends and foes."[1]

At this time the castle was in the hands of the rebels. It had been held for the king by Lord Seymour, and after Wilmot's victory no doubt returned to his keeping, but in the following year, in his absence, his wife and daughter were made prisoners, and Sir Neville Poole seized it for the Parliament. However, after the victory of Prince Rupert over the Earl of Essex in

[1] Clarendon, *Hist. of the Rebellion* (ed. 1707), ii. 82-3.

Ahlbourne Chase, the Royalists re-occupied the castle, and the king himself was there in April and November, 1643, and again in 1644, when he reviewed his army upon the scene of Rupert's victory. In all these changes of the war the town of course suffered grievously. Indeed the marks of gunshot may still be seen on St. Mary's tower. In 1653 there followed the great fire.

With the return of more peaceful times on the restoration of Charles II., the castle received the king and queen in their progress through the west, Francis Lord Seymour receiving them there in the new house he had built by the hand of Webb after a design by Inigo Jones, which was to have so curious a career and now forms the nucleus of Marlborough College.

The most famous of the mistresses of this new mansion was not, however, she who entertained Charles II. and Pepys, but Frances, granddaughter of the first Lord Weymouth, Countess of Hertford, and afterwards Duchess of Somerset. She it was who obtained the pardon of the wretched poet, Richard Savage, when convicted of murder in a tavern brawl. She liked bad poets and obscure painters and spurious architecture, manufactured ruins and impossible pastorals. She had, however, a generous heart, and though this cannot excuse her taste or mitigate her vulgarity it should be reckoned to her for righteousness. She turned the old gardens of the castle into a horrid menagerie of grottoes, cascades and ruins in imitation of Pope's contrivances at Twickenham. Here amid these monstrous barbarities she entertained Dr. Watts and James Thomson of "The Seasons." Dr. Watts advised her about her son, Lord Beauchamp, "who had a complete inability to learn repetition." Thomson dedicated to her his poem on "Spring" in a too familiar and prosaic style. But "Hertford" as he calls her, though she was "blooming and benevolent," soon sickened of the wretched little drunkard and when she found that he preferred drinking with her husband to suffering "pastoral meditations" with herself, turned him out.

We are not surprised to learn that Lord Beauchamp, whose "inability to learn repetition" occupied the attention of Dr. Watts, died young. The castle in consequence went to Lady Elizabeth, who married Sir Hugh Smithson who, related to the ancient house of Percy through his mother, was presently

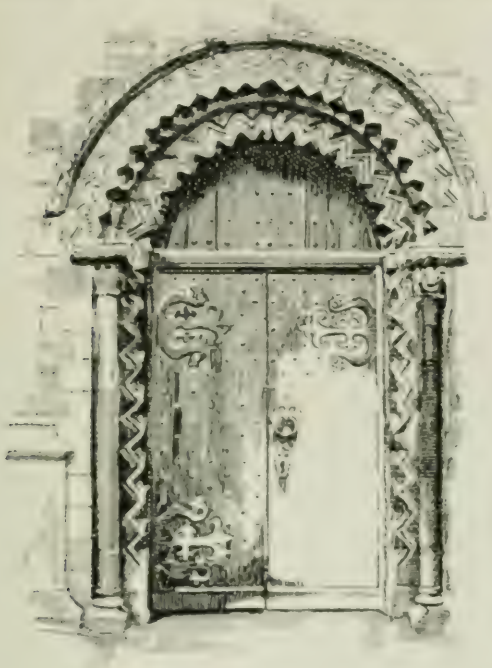
created Earl of Northumberland. The Smithsons, however, had no associations with Marlborough, and the castle house and gardens fell into ruins till a Mr. Cotterell hired the place and opened it as an inn; and an inn it remained for a hundred years, as famous as any on the Bath road. Here Lord Chatham put up, in 1767, for some weeks. "Everybody who travelled that road was amazed by the number of his attendants. Footmen and grooms dressed in his family livery filled the whole inn, though one of the largest in England, and swarmed in the streets of the little town. The truth was that the invalid had insisted that during his stay all the waiters and stableboys of the castle should wear his livery." As an inn it closed its doors in 1843. Meanwhile it had been bought by Lord Ailesbury. In 1842, however, the Rev. Charles Plater had conceived the idea of founding a school in Marlborough, more especially for the sons of clergymen. The old grammar school, founded by Edward VI. in 1550, served the needs of the town and neighbourhood; but Mr. Plater's idea was larger, he wished to found a great public school comparable with Winchester. Marlborough College was accordingly opened on August 26, 1843, the nucleus of its buildings being the old Castle Inn that had been Lord Seymour's mansion and is still the only ancient part of the great school, that is known throughout the empire. Among its headmasters have been Bishop Cotton, who made the school what it is, Dean Bradley and Dean Farrar.

The town itself has little that is ancient to show. Gone is the old market house, and apart from the old houses in the wide High Street the churches alone remain of any interest.

Of these, St. Peter's close to the old castle is a building in its main features of 1460. That a Norman church stood here is certain, for we have record of it, but it was totally destroyed and nothing at all is left of it. The present building would seem to have been a fine one of its period, the tower resembling that at Mere, before it was "restored" by T. H. Wyatt in 1862. To him is due the east window, and he abolished the old barrel roof of the nave; indeed, it was only lack of money that prevented him from destroying the fifteenth century stone-vaulting of the chancel. The south porch with a small priest's chamber over it, a work of the early sixteenth century, happily escaped him. Of old there was here an altar of St. Katherine served by a chantry priest who lived at the old Chantry

House which is still standing on the north side of the High Street.

In this church Thomas Wolsey, A.M., deacon of Norwich diocese, perpetual fellow of St. Mary Magdalen College, Oxford, was ordained priest in March, 1498. This was the famous



Cardinal. In the chancel there remains a good seventeenth century monument to Sir Nicholas and Lady Mary Hyde, in part at least Italian work. Sir Nicholas was uncle of the historian and was himself Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench. Curiously enough, he died of gaol fever caught from a prisoner he was trying at Norwich.

The church of St. Mary stands at the other end of the

town. That a Norman building once stood here we are assured by the Norman doorway at the west end, which is not, however, in its original place. Other fragments too remain. The church was enlarged in the thirteenth century when a new north aisle was built. In the end of the fifteenth century, however, the whole church was remodelled, the south aisle was rebuilt and a chapel erected at the east end. In the early part of the sixteenth century the tower was built and then after the fire of 1652 the whole church was again remodelled. The most interesting things here to-day, however, are discoveries of Mr. Ponting, who in 1900 found two small carved stones when he was removing the vestry. He inserted them in the eastern wall of the south aisle. One of these stones is a corbel of the fifteenth century. The other, however, is nothing less than a defaced Roman sculpture of the goddess Fortuna. It is a carving in bas-relief measuring 14 inches in height by 11 inches in breadth. It was probably defaced in the sixteenth century by some fool who thought he was hacking at a Christian saint, perhaps St. Katherine, for Fortuna too is represented with a wheel. It is possible that this work comes from Cunetio, or we may, perhaps, see in it evidence of the Roman occupation of the Castle Mound.

The only religious house we know anything of in Marlborough was the house of White Friars, Carmelites, that is, dedicated in honour of St. Margaret, some remains of which are now seen in some cottages on the way to the town from the station. This house was founded in 1316 by John Godwin and William Remesbach, and its site was granted upon its suppression by Henry VIII. to John Pye and Robert Brown. Of the two hospitals of St. John Baptist and St. Thomas of Canterbury, both founded in the thirteenth century, not a stone remains.

One other church, though not properly in the town, has, I think, from time immemorial always been reckoned among the sanctuaries of Marlborough. This is St. George's church at Preshute, among the trees to the west of the castle and anciently in the castle grounds. The name would seem to denote Priest's Hole, and as we happen to know, a recluse even in the thirteenth century did live there. In 1215 King John "for the safety of his soul and the souls of his predecessors and successors gave unto Eva the Recluse of Preshute the sum of one denarius a day which she should enjoy in free gift so long as she

lived to be doled to her by the hands of the Constable of Marlborough."

The church itself has been, like all the Marlborough churches, largely rebuilt, but the Norman pillars remain, and there is there a most curious font of black marble of which Camden says of the people of Marlborough, "they brag of nothing more than of the Font . . . in the neighbouring church of Preshut in which as the tradition goes several Princes were heretofore baptised." The tradition asserts that King John himself was baptised in it; but as he was born at Oxford, this seems unlikely. Nevertheless, the font is Norman, and probably once stood in the chapel of St. Nicholas within the walls of the castle, whence it was transferred to the church in whose parish the greater portion of the castle grounds lay. It is possible that princes have been baptised in it, though not perhaps King John. It is a huge round moulded basin standing on a plain shaft, the whole three feet six inches in diameter by two feet nine inches high.

Three miles to the west of Marlborough upon the road to Avebury stands Fyfield. The church there is an old Transitional Norman building with Perpendicular western tower. All, however, has been restored, the loveliest thing remaining there being the great elms of the churchyard in whose mystery and silence the church stands. To the north in Clatford Bottom stands the Devil's Den, a dolmen upon the remains of a mound.

But by far the most interesting place within the immediate neighbourhood of Marlborough is Mildenhall, where Folly Farm marks the site of the ancient Roman station of Cunetio. Here there is a Roman well. Two others have been found in Black Field, east of Mildenhall church, where Hoare places Lower Cunetio. Here, too, a great number of coins have been found. The place, which is mentioned in the Antonine Itinerary, was certainly important, since it was here the road from Cirencester to Winchester forded the Kennet, while another road left Cunetio for Spinae. Of this, however, we know nothing.

Mildenhall has this attraction also, that its church of St. John the Baptist is ancient, its future—in spite of the inscription in the modern shields attached to the roof trusses: "this church deeply in decay has been all but rebuilded . . . in 1816 . . ."—has not been touched. It is a very noble example of a parish church, the nave of the twelfth, the tower and aisles of the

thirteenth, the clerestory and chancel of the fifteenth century.

The earliest work here is the south arcade of the nave with its round columns, semicircular arches with variously sculptured capitals all in an excellent state and dating about 1160. The north arcade is not much later. The chancel arch is rather Early English than Transitional Norman, and dates about 1200; the tower arch is perfectly Early English, as are the two lower stages of the tower, which completed the tower of those days, the third storey is Perpendicular. The aisles date, I suppose, about 1225, except the eastern bays, which are of the fifteenth century. The big lancet westward of the porch is in part of chalk, and very low; its use is obscure. It is certain that there was a thirteenth century chancel, for the priest's door of it remains; but that we see was built early in the fifteenth century, and the nave, clerestory and roof are later still; the latter, indeed, has been tampered with in the sixteenth century. A certain amount of old glass remains in the chancel windows; in the east window, for instance, are two figures, one of them a bishop with the inscription *Augustinus*. The "all but" rebuilding of 1816 was, it seems, concerned only with the very elaborate and expensive woodwork everywhere to be seen, which is so good of its kind that it seems a pity to speak ill of it. Mr. Ponting draws attention to the north and south windows in the middle stage of the tower. These are each of two lights with curious square heads and pilaster-like mullions with rudely moulded capitals and bases. I should have taken them for fifteenth century work, but that he points out that they "recall Saxon work in form but not in detail." He assures us they are of the thirteenth century, "a curious survival of an older type."

From Mildenhall I went up the shallow Og valley to Ogbourne St. Andrew, deliciously nestling away under the downs, a charming little place of cottages, with a grand old church reigning over all. There can be few more interesting village churches than Ogbourne St. Andrew. It consists of clerestoried nave of two bays with aisles continued forth westward about the western tower, chancel and south porch.

The nave originally consisted, Mr. Ponting tells us, of three bays of Norman work, but since the church stood so near the churchyard wall on the west, when in the fifteenth century a western tower was to be built there was no room for it beyond

the church, so it was built on the west end of the nave. Thus, as we see it, the nave only consists of two bays, though the aisles are of their old length. These two bays, both north and south, date about 1150, and the aisles are not much later. They are Transitional work, as is the fine south doorway, though its mouldings are Early English. The chancel is later, but not much—of the earlier part of the thirteenth century. Note the round-headed priest's door on the south. Just west of this is a window pointed within, square-headed without, which Mr.



Ogbourne St. Andrew.

Ponting assures us is a specimen of the "Sanctus" window—from which the Sanctus bell was rung. Here, too, but further eastward, is a double piscina cut in the top of a Norman capital. The east window is a Decorated work re-made in 1873.

The tower is a fine one of the middle of the fifteenth century. Its curious position I have already spoken of. In the east wall of the belfry is a small opening for a "Sanctus" bell that probably superseded, according to Mr. Ponting, the earlier "Sanctus" window in the chancel. There are four bells in the tower, No. 3 being a mediæval one with the black letter inscription ✠ **Trinitatem Adoremus.** In the fifteenth century the north aisle was rebuilt and the clerestory added

to the nave. Two pieces of old glass remain in the window of the south aisle, both of the fifteenth century, one representing a chalice, the other the emblems of the Passion. The old roofs, also of the fifteenth century, remain over nave and aisles, that over the north aisle is supported by stone corbels, but that of the chancel is new. There is a fine monument in the chancel bearing the bust effigies of "William Goddard of Ogbourne St. Andrew gent, and Elizabeth his wife," with kneeling figures of their eight children below, four girls and four boys, a desk between them. The monument was erected by the youngest of these, Thomas, in 1655: it looks earlier.

Nearly two miles further up the little valley stands Ogbourne St. George. Here, in 1149, Maud of Wallingford founded a priory or cell of the Abbey of Bec in Normandy. Tradition places the site of it west of the church where the manor house stands, and certain ancient walls there might seem to confirm this. The church we see, however, had nothing to do with this, I suppose. It consists of nave and aisles of three bays, chancel with chapels really part of the aisles, south porch and western tower, and would be a far more interesting building than it is if it had not been so villainously scraped.

In the south arcade of the nave we have work of the end of the twelfth century. The south doorway, which is of the early thirteenth century, has been rebuilt when the aisle we see was also rebuilt. The chancel arch is also of the early thirteenth century, but the chancel itself was evidently rebuilt in the fourteenth century, when the spoiled east window of three lights and the spoiled north window of two lights were inserted. Perhaps it was then the floor of the chancel was raised, as the portions of the sedilia and piscina suggest. In the south wall a priest's door was inserted in the fifteenth century.

The north arcade of the nave is all of the fourteenth century, but of two periods. The first aisle added here was, according to Mr. Ponting, of only two bays' length, and dated circa 1330; but fifty years later it was extended westwards and eastwards and the whole rebuilt, the thirteenth century doorway being re-erected here as on the south. The extension of the aisle eastwards formed a chancel chapel, and this was dedicated to the Blessed Trinity. In 1536 Thomas Goddard declares in his will that he wishes to be buried "within the chapel of the Holy Trinity before the image of the Holy Trinity." His

father and mother already lay there, the brass now at the east end of the nave has come from the pavement of the chapel. There we read :—" *Of Yo' charite pray for the soules of Thomas Goddard and Johan his wife, which Thom̃s dyed the XXVI day of August A° MD XVII. & who' soul Ihu have mci.*

A similar work was now undertaken on the south side of the church. The screens of these chapels appear to be in part



Aldbourne.

of the fifteenth century. The tower is a fine one of this period, to which also the clerestory belongs.

It is a walk of nearly five miles by a byway over the high down more than eight hundred feet above the sea to Aldbourne, a large and beautiful village in the famous chase of the same name. Nothing can be grander or more lonely than these high downs; so lonely indeed are they that it is with a peculiar pleasure one hails the fine, if mutilated, tower of Aldbourne church.

This church, which is a fine one, is dedicated in honour of St Mary Magdalen, but it now bears the name of St. Michael,

which I cannot but think it may have got when that noble tower was built,[1] for St. Michael rejoices in high places and in all manner of towers, as many of them which still bear his name signify to us. No doubt a cruciform twelfth century church stood here, but this was already in transformation in the thirteenth century when the chancel we see was built with its side chapels; while in the fifteenth century the nave was transfigured, the central tower was destroyed and the present magnificent but mutilated western tower was built, a thing in its original condition almost good enough to be in Somerset. The north porch, the chapel of the south transept and all the roofs in the church save that in the chancel, also belong to this period. The south porch, which like the north had once a chamber over it, was mutilated not long ago; it covers still a fine twelfth century doorway by which we enter the church.

In the nave the south arcade remains substantially of the twelfth century, but the fifteenth century has cut away and transfigured the north arcade, making all new.

The chancel remains of the thirteenth century but is spoiled by the modern east window. There is an aumbry in the south wall. The western pier of the arch between the chancel and the north chapel is pierced by a double squint. This north chapel was that of "Our Lady in Aldbourne," and there is a niche for her statue with three roses yet under it because she was Rosa Mystica. Here too is a curious seventeenth century tomb with half figures of Edward Walronde, who died in 1617, aged ninety-six, and his brother William, who died 1614, aged eighty-four. Above is the crest and beneath the coat of the family.

In the chancel against the north wall is an altar tomb with a magnificent incised slab, a very splendid and rarely fine specimen representing John Stone, parish priest of Aldbourne in the early sixteenth century. The effigy is that of a priest fully vested, his head on a cushion and in his hands a chalice. On the floor close by is a small brass to Henry Frekylton, cantorist of the chantry of "Our Lady's Guild"—Our Lady in Aldbourne. He died September 10, 1508, and the symbols of his office, the Missal and a Chalice, are shown in separate brasses in the stone slab.

[1] Aldbourne Feast is held on the Monday within the octave of St. Mary Magdalen; a fairly sure confirmation of the dedication of the church.

In the south transept or Upham Aisle is a fine brass to Richard Goddard of Upham and Elizabeth his wife (d. 1482). Here, too, is a large monument of early seventeenth century style, with effigies of Thomas Goddard (d. 1597), his wife, three sons and a daughter, all kneeling. On a shield are their arms, and above the tomb is an old helmet on an iron bracket. The screen here before the south chapel, now the vestry and organ chamber, is made up of old pieces of the destroyed rood screen. In the fine western tower are eight bells, two of which are medieval. Upon one in which was the Angelus bell, we read: STELLA MARIS SUCCURRE PIISIMA NOBIS; on the other a reference to St. Michael, and it is this which makes me think that it was the building of this tower that renamed the church:—INTONAT: DE: CELIS: VOX: CAMPANE: MICHAELIS: DEUS: PROPICIUS: ESTO: A'TABUS: RICARDI: GODARD: QUONDAM: DE: UPHAM: ELIZABETH: ET: ELIZABETH: UXORUM: EIUS: AC: A'TABUS: O'M: LIBEROR'UM: ET: PARENTUM: SUORUM: QUI: HANC: CAMPANAM: FIERI: FECERUNT: ANNO: D'NI: MCCCCXVI.

A hand bell, Mr. Doran Webb tells us, with the inscription: *O Mater Dei memento mei.* *I. Wegden MDLX* was found at Aldbourne in 1854. I suppose it may have been the little sacring bell of the chantry of Our Lady in Aldbourne.

The mutilated cross on the green should be noticed.

Aldbourne Chase was enclosed in 1805; it was apparently a wild country of some 5,000 acres, a favourite hunting ground of John of Gaunt, who lived at the very curious old manor house at Upper Upham, and is said also to have occupied a house which stood on the site of the Court House by Aldbourne churchyard, now the vicarage, but in which in 1669 one of the largest "meetings" of nonconformist ministers in Wiltshire used to take place. Some three hundred persons, it is said, used to gather there to hear them every Sunday and Thursday.

Upper Upham House is on the top of the downs some three miles north-west of Aldbourne. As we see it, it is a sixteenth century house and never saw "time honoured Lancaster." It is a very noble old house now fallen from its high estate, and was the manor house of the Goddards, who lie so many of them in these churches.

It was late afternoon when I left Upper Upham and already dusk when I reached Ogbourne St. George to wait for the tram to Marlborough.

CHAPTER XIX

AVEBURY, SILBURY HILL, YATESBURY, BERWICK BROSETT, WINTERBOURNE BASSETT, BROAD HINTON, CLIFFE PYPARD AND WROUGHTON

MARLBOROUGH is by far the best centre from which to visit Avebury, possibly the oldest and certainly the largest megalithic monument in the British islands and perhaps in Europe. By setting out from Marlborough up the valley of the Kennet along the route of the old Roman road by Clatford and Fyfield, it is possible to see the Devil's Den, the Grey Wethers and Silbury Hill, on the way to Avebury, and as it seems not impossible that all these strange things had some relation the one to the other, it is well to see them thus in a single march.

The Devil's Den, the dolmen of which I have already spoken, consists of a stone slab 9 feet by 8 feet, originally resting on four uprights of which but one remains. It stands in Clatford Bottom to the north of that village upon the remains of a Long Barrow. Striking thence up the valley and so westward over the downs which are crossed from north to south by the Ridge Way, one presently comes upon the Grey Wethers, huge sarsen stones, a whole wilderness of them, untouched since they were strewn upon the downs when the looser materials of the lower tertiary strata were swept onward. They form a bewildering labyrinth through which the traveller threads his way, and, after climbing Overton hill, comes directly to Avebury.

From that hill I think one gets the best, if not the only, clear idea of what Avebury really was. It is possible thence to imagine the vast circle of unhewn sarsens enclosing two other separate double circles, approached by one if not two avenues of stone and encircled by a vast rampart which made up this amazing monument. To the south stands Silbury, that inex-

plicable hill vast and conical, as it were a barbaric pyramid, while all around the downs are spread out and far away westward rise the wooded heights of Bowood to the east the forest of Savernake.

To describe Avebury is impossible. It is, indeed, so much of a ruin that an unobservant traveller might come to the



Avebury. Remains of Stone Circle.

little village, that "like some beautiful parasite has grown up, at the expense and in the midst of the ancient temple," almost without suspecting that he was in the presence of a monument which to Stonehenge was "as a cathedral to a parish church." More than 650 of these huge megaliths which went to make Avebury have been destroyed, the village and the roads have been built from them, and the village itself now occupies an area once formed into circular spaces by those

vanished stones and now cut into quadrants by the roads. All is, however, still encircled by the great earthwork, and its inner ditch which in its turn seems to be everywhere surrounded over a vast tract of country by many scattered barrows. But it is impossible from the earthwork to-day to form any idea of what Avebury was. One can only take the assertions of the archæologists upon trust, and using their plans attempt to realise here on the spot the majesty that once stood here.

The ruined rampart 4,442 feet in circumference, and once not less than 40 feet high, with a deep fosse upon the inner side, encloses an area of not less than 28 acres. Anciently on the inner margin of the fosse a vast palisade of unhewn sarsens rose like a crown, one hundred in number, they say, and twenty-seven feet apart. But nine of these remain erect and only ten others are visible; sixteen, they say, are buried, the rest have been destroyed to build houses and pigstyes. The size of the stones left is enormous; one of them measures 13 feet 10 inches high by 18 feet wide by 5 feet 6 inches thick; another near by cannot be very far short of this.

Within this vast circle of monoliths are two others, each of thirty stones. Of that to the south but two stones remain erect, while three are prostrate—the rest are gone. Of that to the north two stones also remain erect, two are prostrate and one is known to be buried. Within each of these two circles was a concentric circle of twelve stones of which nothing seems to remain. Within the northern double circle were three large stones forming an adytum, the core; of these two remain, the latter is 17 feet high, 7 feet 7 inches wide and 2 feet 4 inches thick.

Of the 650 stones, which are reckoned to have completed the monument, but 15 remain upright, 16 are prostrate and 18 are known to be buried.

The circular earthwork was approached certainly by one avenue from the south-east of which 15 stones remain. Dr. Stukeley (1724), the first archæologist systematically to map Avebury, believed that there was another avenue running south-west to Beckhampton, and asserted that within living memory ten stones of it were standing. He considered too that both avenues were serpentine. But Aubrey knew nothing of this avenue, and it seems to most modern students to have

existed only in the imagination of Dr. Stukeley. The two stones near Beckhampton, which Aubrey calls the Devil's Quoits and which are now known as the Long Stones, probably formed part of another circle.

The reader who may not have visited Avebury will be astonished to learn that this vast monument is not mentioned or recorded by any writer known to us before the seventeenth century; but anyone who has been to Avebury will understand this silence. Moreover, had Avebury been as conspicuous as the temples of Paestum, it is unlikely that it would have attracted more attention than they. The history of archaeology has yet to be written. It will surely be one of the most fascinating undertakings of the future historian to explain, not only how Avebury for so long lay hid, but how those enormous and majestic temples less than twenty-five miles from Salerno and less than four from Capaccio, an episcopal city, remained entirely unknown to the Middle Age and the Renaissance, nay until the eighteenth century, when, about 1740, they were discovered by a certain Conte Gazola, to be first accurately described by an Englishman, Swinburne, in 1779, and first mapped by another Englishman, Wilkins, in 1807. It is not, therefore, surprising that Avebury was not discovered till 1648.

Leland passed it by without suspecting the monument, which fills us with wonder. "Kenet risithe north north west," he writes, "at *Selbiri* hille botum whereby hath ben camps and sepultures of men of warre as at *Aubyri* a mile off, and in dyvers places of the plague."

Camden is almost as ignorant. "Abury," he tells us, is "an uplandish village built in an old camp as it seemeth, but of no large compass. It is environed with a fair trench, and hath four gates, in two of which stand huge stones as jambs, but so rude that they seem rather natural than artificial; of which there are some other in the said village."[1]

It is to Aubrey that we owe the first account of the monument as we owe to him its discovery. After him came a host of writers ever growing more numerous. There is Pepys in 1688,

[1] Drayton does not speak of Avebury, though he does, of course, of Stonehenge, in his *Polyolbion*. It is possible that Sir John Harington, in the notes to his translation (1634) of the Third Book of *Orlando Furioso*, refers to Avebury, but by no means certain.

for instance; but the first monograph upon Avebury was published in 1723 by Thomas Twining, entitled "*Avebury in Wiltshire the remains of a Roman work erected by Vespasian and Julius Agricola during their several commands in Brittany.*" He argued that Avebury was a temple of Terminus marking the northern boundary of the Belgae, and save that his book is the first upon the monument, it deserves no notice. Then in 1743 came Dr. Stukeley, who for all his wild fancies and inaccuracies gave us the first detailed account of the plan upon which the temple, if such it be, was constructed. In 1812 Sir R. Hoare surveyed the ruin and again in 1819. In 1857 William Long published the best general account of the monument that had till then appeared, and this has not been altogether superseded yet.

It is interesting to note the process of destruction that has proceeded apace since Aubrey wrote his account in 1663. To take only the stones of the vast outer circle. Aubrey (1663) notes thirty-one as standing; Stukeley (1724) notes eighteen; Hoare (1819) ten; Long (1857) ten; to-day there are nine. It is obvious, therefore, that the period of destruction, of which we have record, was that between 1663 and 1819. And indeed we know that in the eighteenth century a certain Tom Robinson and a farmer Green were the chief vandals. It seems they used to break up and carry off what they could to serve as "merestones," boundary stones for their fields. But the damage they did was only a continuation of what had for long been going on, though they seem to have been especially active, for of the hundred original stones, thirty-one were standing in 1663, whereas in 1819 Hoare found but ten.

Since the end of the seventeenth century, when Lord Scrope dug into and destroyed a part of the rampart and found a large number of burnt bones and horns of animals, several excavations have been undertaken at Avebury, chiefly with the object of ascertaining the age of the monument and perhaps its uses. The last of these was begun in 1908, when Norman and Early English pottery was found down to 4 feet 6 inches from the surface. Roman pottery to a depth of from five to six feet, and below, five fragments of Bronze Age pottery down to 12 feet 6 inches. Five red deer antler picks were also found on the floor of the ditch, and a chipped flint knife of Neolithic type. All that has been discovered would seem to point to

the dawn of the Bronze Age as that of its origin ; to that age, too, many of the barrows in the neighbourhood are also due. Some archæologists assure us, however, that Avebury is a neolithic monument, and Mr. Reginald Smith considers that the round-bottomed pottery, fragments of which have been found in the silting of the ditch, support such a theory. The flint implements found at the bottom of the ditch and the stags' horn picks also seem to point to the Neolithic Age, but by no means surely, for as we have seen at Stonehenge both were used certainly in the Bronze Age, and the latter, it is asserted, even in medieval times. But this to the ordinary man would seem certain at least, that Avebury is far older than Stonehenge, which is, it is now generally conceded, a work of the earliest Bronze Age dating about 1800 B.C. The sarsens and blue stones of Stonehenge are all worked and hewn and shaped ; they would seem, therefore, to be the work of later time than that of the unhewn sarsens of Avebury. Avebury was a work almost as much of nature as of man. The "grey wethers" strewn upon the downs were enforced as they were into man's service, and all unhewn upreared there in honour of some deity of whom we know nothing or for some purpose we may guess at but never know. If the date of Stonehenge is rightly given as 1800 B.C., we cannot suppose Avebury to be later than 2000 B.C. It is earlier than Stonehenge, but is not separated from that monument by so great a space of time as an age would fill. You cannot truly say Stonehenge is of the Bronze Age, Avebury Neolithic.

Before examining the interesting church at Avebury, the traveller should pass down the road to West Kennet, and turning there once more along the high road which follows the line of the old Roman Way come to Silbury Hill, leaving the Long Barrow a mile to the south.

Silbury is mentioned by Leland, but he does not seem to be aware that it is the work of man, and it is again to Aubrey we turn. He fully realises that it is artificial, and says that Sir Jonas Moor, Surveyor of the Ordnance, told him, "it would cost three score or rather (I think) four score thousand pounds to make such a hill now. No history gives any account of this hill ; the tradition only is that King Sil or Zel as the country folks pronounce, was buried here on horseback and that the hill was raysed while a posset of milke was seething. The

name of this hill as also of Silchester makes one suspect it to be a Roman name *sc.* Silius."[1]

What we see to-day cannot be very different from what Aubrey saw. Silbury Hill is a vast conical mound, the largest of which we have any record in Europe built by the hand of man, having an average perpendicular height of 125 feet and an angle inclination of 30 degrees. At the base it measures 1,657 feet in circumference, has a large diameter of 552 feet and occupies five acres. A circle of sarsen stones once surrounded it, but of these very few are now visible. What purpose it served remains a mystery. It is generally thought to have been a tomb, and Dr. Stukeley tells us that the remains of the royal founder of Avebury were dug up on the top of the hill in 1723, together with the royal bridle, of which indeed he gives an engraving in his book. If it be true that an interment was discovered on the top of Silbury Hill in 1723, it would probably account for the fact that though a shaft was sunk from the summit by the Duke of Northumberland and Colonel Drax in 1777, and the mound was tunnelled in 1849 by the Archæological Institute, no interment was found nor indeed any sign of the sepulchral origin of the mound. Indeed to this day we know nothing of it, and cannot even be sure that it had any relation whatever to Avebury.

As to the age of Silbury the most various opinions are still expressed. Sir W. H. St. John Hope has convinced himself that it is a Norman Castle motte, a work of the Conqueror. It seems certain, however, after the excavations of the Wiltshire Archæological Society in 1867, that the Roman road does suddenly turn here, though whether to avoid the hill or to meet the ford of the Kennet perhaps cannot be decided. If it turned to avoid the Hill, Silbury is, of course, older than the Roman occupation. This too, seems to be confirmed by the discovery in 1886 of a number of flint plates at a level in the chalk silting round the base of the mound which, if it proves anything, proves that flint-using people were on the site a considerable time after the raising of the mound. Beyond this it is impossible to go at present.

Before returning to Avebury the traveller should go south over the downs as far as the Long Barrow of West Kennet. This, though considerably ruined, is some 335 feet long. It

[1] *Mon. Brit.* ii. pt. 3, p. 6.

was opened by Thurnham in 1859, who found therein one large chamber formed of six sarsens covered by three others. This measured 8 feet by 9 feet, and was 8 feet high. A gallery 15 feet long led from the chamber to the eastern edge of the barrow. Six skeletons were found in the chamber in a crouching position, and two of the skulls had been cleft. There was also a considerable quantity of pottery. All is now in ruin.

To return now to Avebury. The old and most interesting church of St. James there stands just without the rampart. It has suffered much from restoration in the early nineteenth century, the nave arcade is a work of 1828, and the chancel was rebuilt in 1879, but enough remains to show that we have here the remains, and as far as the nave goes the frame-work, of a pre-Conquest building and in consequence of great interest.

Outside we may still see between the upper and lower ranges of windows in the nave a projecting string course of the eleventh century, while at the west end the long and short work can be seen. Within, the church is striking by reason of the height of the nave and its extreme breadth in comparison with the length of the church. The Saxon nave which within has almost disappeared had four windows on each side. Two of these remain at the west end. Above was a clerestory of small openings, which Mr. Ponting replaced and has satisfied himself "that they are now in pretty nearly the same places as they formerly occupied." The nave roof is the original one. Aisles were added to the earlier nave in the twelfth century, the old walls being cut into piers. The south doorway remains of this date, but has been rebuilt. The north aisle as we see it is, like the south, of about 1460 when the tower was built. The chancel is that of the fourteenth century, rebuilt in 1879, and by far the poorest part of the church. The font is curious, and late Norman, not Saxon: the sculpture upon it represents a bishop with his crosier, vested and mitred and with a book in his hand—a dragon on either side pulls at his vestments.

Avebury House, an Elizabethan mansion, occupies the site of an alien priory, a cell to the Benedictine house of St. George de Boscherville. It was founded in 1110, and it is possible that here we may find the rebuilders of the church in the twelfth century. When suppressed as an alien priory, it was given to St. Mary's, Winchester College, Oxford. Do we here see the

fourteenth century rebuilders of the church? In the time of Henry IV., however, the Priory was annexed to Fotheringay College, Northamptonhsire, and was sold at the dissolution to Sir William Sharington, who sold to the Dunches. The old ruined dovecote remains.

Three miles north-west of Avebury over the downs stands the village of Yatesbury. This is a lonely and quiet place, a true downland village 536 feet over the sea. It is mentioned, however,



Avebury Manor House.

in Domesday Book, and was then a Royal manor held of the King by Aluredus de Ispania. The glory of the place is its church dedicated in honour of All Saints. It is a small but beautiful building consisting of nave, chancel, north aisle, south porch and western tower. The church was originally Norman and boasted a south aisle, as the arch and pillars in the south wall prove. The font is a very fine one of the end of the twelfth century, when the church was rebuilt, as the pointed arches of the north arcade show. At the end of the fourteenth century the church was again restored, the south aisle removed, and the

Perpendicular windows inserted and the fine tower built. The chancel and chancel arch are completely rebuildings of 1854.

Due north of Avebury upon the Swindon road beyond Winterbourne Monkton, which since its church was rebuilt in 1878 has nothing to show save a surprisingly beautiful twelfth century font, stands Berwick Bassett. Here the nave of the church alone is medieval, dating from the end of the fourteenth century. But it is well worth a visit for the sake of its lovely Decorated font, and the fine fifteenth century screen of five bays across the modern chancel arch. In the floor of the chancel is a brass to William Bayley (d. 1427). The walls of this nave, like those of the church of Winterbourne Bassett two miles to the north of it and just off the highway, are built of broken sarsen stones. Both Berwick Bassett and Winterbourne Bassett stand under the long height known as Hackham Hill, to the south of which a Romano-British village has been discovered.

Winterbourne Bassett boasts one of the most beautiful churches in the country, beautiful in its details and in its design, and owing everything to that fourteenth century of which we can never have enough. It seems that the manor was granted by King John to the Bassetts, who held it till 1271, when it passed to Hugh Despencer the Elder, and it is to him and his family we owe the delight of the church. The building consists of chancel, nave with arcade of three bays on the north, north chapel opening from it, south porch and western tower.

The north chapel or transept is the earliest part of the church we see. It was the chapel of the manor, and was reached by a door in the north aisle, a very lovely fourteenth century work. The chapel is gabled at the north end, and there under an exquisite three-light window of the fourteenth century is a contemporary recessed and canopied tomb most exquisitely carved and finished. Nothing could be more lovely than the whole composition of tomb and window. It is one of the glories of Wiltshire. Within the tomb is a thirteenth century slab that does not belong to it. Thereon are laid two sculptured figures, hand clasped in hand, a man and a woman, probably Bassetts.

The nave arcade is lovely too, the arch into the chapel being richer than the rest; nor is the chancel with its good arch less fine, the two two-light windows north and south, one with fragments of fourteenth century glass, though less rich than the

work in the chapel, being nevertheless very beautiful. In the south wall is a charming piscina.

The fifteenth century work here includes the splendid four-light window by the south porch and the most noble tower of four stages.

The font is Transitional Norman, and points to the existence of an earlier building than that we see. Its cover is of the seventeenth century, as are the pews.

With the loveliness of this fourteenth century church in my heart I went on to Broad Hinton hoping for much but was disappointed—the church there of St. Peter ad Vincula was restored in 1880. It remains, however, worth a visit for the sake of its Jacobean monuments and its oak roof of the same period. The earlier of the monuments is that to Sir Thomas and Lady Wroughton and their eight kneeling children (1597); the other is an altar tomb with effigy in alabaster to Colonel Glanville, who was killed at Bridgwater in 1645. A tablet commemorates Sir John Glanville, Speaker of the Short Parliament. He it was who lived here in the house built out of the ruins of Bradenstoke Priory which he burnt, according to Evelyn, lest it should be garrisoned by the rebels. The Duke of Wellington was lord of the manor here.

Two miles, or maybe rather more, due west of Broad Hinton under the western escarpment of the downs, looking over the valley of the Avon, or rather the valley of a tributary of that rich and fruitful river, lies Cliffe Pypard among the woods, beech and ash and chestnuts over the elms. The village is beautiful itself, and its noble situation lends it something of perfection.

The church of St. Peter is, as regards the tower, nave, aisles and porch, of the latter half of the fifteenth century, the chancel is modern. The work is good, but what is chiefly interesting here is the woodwork, the screen and pulpit and roofs and the monuments. The pulpit is a very fine one of the seventeenth century with excellent carving. It is inscribed: EX DONO JOANIS KINGSTON GEN. ANNO. DOI 1629. The fragments of old glass in the aisle windows are also interesting, but they do not all belong to the church—some pieces, those in the two windows of the north aisle, were collected by Mr. J. E. Nightingale on the continent. In the north aisle, too, there is a recessed tomb with a canopy beneath which is a sadly mutilated effigy in

armour of the fourteenth century. It is said to be one of those Cobhams who were lords here at that time. In the north chapel is a very fine brass originally in the south chapel. It, too, is of the fourteenth century, I think. A tablet over the south door commemorates Elizabeth Godard (d. 1585), her effigy, with that of her husband, in wood, now lie by the chancel arch; their canopied tomb, however, originally stood in the north chapel. At the west end of the south aisle is a good eighteenth century monument with a life-size figure in white marble standing by an urn of Thomas Spackman carpenter—the richest carpenter, I imagine, that ever lived.

From Broad Hinton I went on by the high road to Wroughton under the northern steepness of the downs, and in sight of the darkness of Swindon. Here, in spite of Aubrey, who says only this of Wroughton Church, that "the old windowes are all spoiled," I found an interesting building with a considerable amount of good fourteenth century work, the loveliest things being the sedilia and piscina in the chancel. The south and north doorways still bear witness to a church of the twelfth century, but apart from them what we see is a work of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; almost all the work is fine, the best of all being the fourteenth century sedilia and the lovely fifteenth century western arch of the south arcade. The ruined reredos can never have been much of a work of art.

It was almost dark when I left this church of St. John Baptist and St. Helen, and looking upon the sprawling town of Swindon before me I had not the heart to trudge the two miles that lay between. So I made for the inn at Wroughton to face the only industrial town in Wiltshire by daylight.

CHAPTER XX

SWINDON AND ROUND ABOUT

SWINDON, I suppose, to most men of middle age, is remembered merely as a junction on the Great Western Railway, 77¼ miles from London, where the expresses used to stop always for ten minutes, because we were told the refreshment rooms on the platform had a contract with the railway insisting upon this. All that has gone, and, for the traveller to the West, Swindon has altogether lost its pre-eminence. It still remains, however, for most of us a modern industrial town of 50,000 inhabitants, which lives by and for the great railway which has established there its engineering works.

Such a Swindon indeed exists, and of it in a book like this there can be nothing to say; but, though unknown to the average traveller upon the Great Western road, in the southern hills above New Swindon, the old market town dating back to the Middle Ages, and in some sort perhaps even to Roman times, still exists, and is to be loved not only for its own sake but for the sake of those who have loved it, good and famous men; as, for instance, Richard Jefferies, who was born within sight of it and wrote among his beautiful and famous writings a sketch of its history.

Swindon stands within three miles of the Roman road we call the Ermin Street, which ran from Cirencester to Speen. To the north-east Stratton St. Margaret stands right upon this road, and, as it is thought, due east of Swindon was the Roman station of Nidum upon this same road, and it is possible that this was the forerunner of the old town, the people of which with the coming of the Dark Age and the Saxon pirates moved up on to the hill westward where old Swindon still stands.[1] In Saxon days at

[1] A Roman villa was discovered at Swindon in the nineties of the last century.

any rate here was a place of abiding, which the Danes seem to have renamed after some Sweyn, if the popular derivation of the name is the right one.

This appears in Domesday Book as the property of five men, the largest owner being Odin, Chamberlain to the Conqueror, the second the great Bishop of Bayeux and the others Alured of Marlborough, Ulric and Ulward. These five properties, all called Swindon in the Domesday Survey, presently came to be known as Haute, Over Swindon, Nether Swindon, Even Swindon, and West Swindon. They passed into various hands, among others into those of the Abbess of Wilton, the Abbot of Malmesbury, and the Prior of Ivychurch; while the rectory belonged until the dissolution to the Augustinian Priory of St. Mary of Southwick near Winchester.

Old Swindon, as we see it to-day on its hill, for all its modern improvements, remains a charming and picturesque place, but very little that is old remains to it. The church is a new building on a new site from designs by Scott, and of the old building only the chancel remains. Indeed the best thing even in Old Swindon remains the unchanging landscape as seen thence, the storied downs with their mysterious entrenchments, camps and castles, where lie the unmemoried dead, across which the ways of our remotest forefathers still wind and hesitate and are lost, and over which the Roman roads still sweep in their arrow flight for Silchester or Winchester. The views are noble, and must explain, I suppose, the affection in which Swindon has always been held by its sons, so that the most sensitive and imaginative among them, the one man of genius the place has produced, writes of it always with sympathy and reverence.

It was in the village of Coate, a mile or more to the south-east of the old town on the road to Liddington, that Richard Jefferies was born. The little hamlet, for it is no more, stands in the valley between the steep escarpment of the downs and the isolated hill of Swindon, and the farmhouse, in which the author of "The Story of My Heart" was born, is still standing and is marked by a tablet. It hides in a truly characteristic way behind the lime trees and its high wall, and though as Mr. Edward Thomas tells us, "stripped of its thatch, its ha-ha gone, its orchard neglected . . . the ghost of the fragrant home described so often in 'Wild Life' and in 'Amaryllis at the Fair,' it remains, and it is to be hoped will remain, to remind us of one whose

voice was a new undertone in English letters." The traveller who lingers in these parts cannot do better than buy Mr. Edward Thomas's book,[1] which is not only a sympathetic biography but a work full of insight and clairvoyance. Certainly we want here no other work unless it be Jefferies' own, "The Amateur Poacher," "The Gamekeeper at Home," in which all this country shines gently transfigured by love. "Burderop Park," Mr. Thomas tells you—"its beech and oak and ash, and its clouds of purple loosestrife, its avenues of limes and wych elms, its grassy spaces strewn with sarsens stately and undisturbed, its large, dull, sufficient-looking, homely house, suggested the 'Okebourne Chase' of 'Round about a Great Estate,' and were not the Downs Jefferies' home, was it not in them and in their contemplation he found his best visions and his greatest consolation so that 'the very light of the sun was whiter and more brilliant here'?"

Upon these downs to the south-east of Coate the road brings us to Liddington, a pretty place truly with a pretty little church with curious tombs of two abbesses, so it is said, of Shaftesbury, one of whom was the founder of the church, and certainly Shaston held the place. Here too, is an old manor house with a fine staircase and remains of its wide moat. Over the high downs southward runs the Ridge Way, and beyond it near a thousand feet over the sea stands Badbury Camp or Liddington Castle, a vast oval earthwork of $7\frac{3}{4}$ acres with a rampart commanding views far and wide over the downs, east and west and south, and northward over the Vale of White Horse to Faringdon and the valley of the Thames. To the south-west far across the Roman way which there traverses the downs to Cunetio stands the dark Castle of Barbury, 800 feet above the sea, which some have thought to be the scene of the victory of Cymric over the Britons in 556.

From Liddington I made my way along under the steepness of the downs, and yet high over the valley eastward to Wanborough, a strong place where, as it is thought, Ceawlin was defeated in 591 by his nephew Cedric, and where in 714 King Ine encountered the Mercians. That Wanborough must have been an important place in the Dark Age is obvious, for not only is it strongly placed here on the escarpment of the down, but it is served by two Roman roads, the Ermin Street and the way

[1] "Richard Jefferies: His Life and Work" (1909).

from Nidam to Winchester, to say nothing of the Ridge Way which passes over the downs to the south.

Wanborough, however, owes most of its attraction for us to its remarkable church of St. Andrew. It is an interesting building with its fine Perpendicular western tower and fourteenth century lantern and steeple over the east end of the nave and consists of nave with north and south aisles and porches and chancel. That a Norman church once stood here certain fragments in the walls of the nave tell us, but the church we see is wholly of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the earliest parts being the nave, aisles, and lantern with its spire. These date about 1300. The lantern is a beautiful hexagon pierced with windows and open into the church. It is crowned by a hexagonal spire with gabled windows, and this standing as it does at the eastern end of the nave is the most striking and beautiful feature of the church, for it does not take the place of a tower but is additional to it.

The eastern bays of the aisles are cut off by arches to form chapels, and very charming they are. Note the good piscina at the east end of the south chapel. The nave once had a clerestory, but this was blinded in the sixteenth century when the present roof was built.

The western tower is a fine one of the early fifteenth century, and has in the middle stage on its western front a very beautiful niche which once, perhaps, held a statue of St. Andrew; at any rate, below it on either side of the west window is his symbol the *crux decussata*. To the early fifteenth century also belongs the north porch above the doorway of which there is also a niche. The chancel and sacristy or chapel on the north date about 1490.

The church was restored by Scott in 1843, and it was then the stone effigies now in the south porch were found. They are of the fourteenth century, and probably represent a Fitzwilliam and his wife, that family then owning the manor. In the floor of the south chapel is a brass with half figures of Thomas and Edith Polton dated with a long inscription in Latin, "MILLENO VIRGLA ANNO QUADRINGENTENO DECCIO . . . OCTO": a curious inscription.

To the east of Wanborough and still on this noble escarpment of the downs stands the village of Little Hinton, with an interesting church dedicated in honour of St. Anne, whose ivy-

mantled tower draws one to it at once. The church consists of chancel, nave with aisles, south porch and western tower, and is a very old building, the nave arcades dating from the twelfth century. The arcades are both of two bays, the round arches supported each by a single round pillar and two half pillars. The northern arcade is the older as is obvious by the rudeness of its workmanship. The south arcade is finer and dates about 1160; both are of chalk.

The chancel arch is Early English, but the chancel, to judge by its side windows and priest's door on the south—the east window is modern—is of the fourteenth century.

The tower and the clerestory of the nave together with roof are of the fifteenth century. The roof is borne by wall shafts resting on corbels sculptured with heads and crosses, one of them the cross of St. Andrew. The south porch is also of this date as are the aisles, but the roofs there are of the seventeenth century, and to this time too belong the reading desk and the pulpit, the latter as an inscription tells us given by Martha Hinton in 1637. The font, if it be genuine, is a very curious one having a band of sculpture under a rude arcade; but it looks to me like an attempt to copy or reproduce old work.

Little Hinton lies but a mile east of the Ermin Street, on which Wanborough may be said to stand. Returning therefore I made my way along the old Roman way north-west across the vale past the supposed site of Nidum, whence a branch road is said to have set out due south for Cunetio, and passing by Stratton Park at the cross roads I came about a mile further on to the considerable village of Stratton St. Margaret.

Stratton certainly got its first name because it stood upon the Roman road, and its second from the dedication of its church, which is in honour of St. Margaret. Aubrey notes that there was little ancient to be seen here, but speaks of "a window on the south side of the church wherein is a picture of St. Katherine with her wheele and another broken in the first column, which I suppose to be St. Margaret the tutelar saint of this church." Both these whatever they were are gone. But Aubrey was too hard on the church, which boasts a Norman north door, now closed, and a nave with aisles of the end of the thirteenth century with particularly graceful arcades supported by slender round columns with richly moulded capitals. The south porch is of the fifteenth century and has its original roof, and the

clerestory and roof over the nave are of the sixteenth century, but the tower and chancel are both modern.

Three seventeenth century monuments are to be found in the north aisle. The first, dated 1645 is of painted wood and commemorates "William Lacy alias Hedges of Kingsdown"; the second is of alabaster and dated 1640; it seems to commemorate the wife of the above, Catherine Hedges. The last is a brass to "Catherine Wakeman of Nyth," dated 1649.

From Stratton St. Margaret I made my way back into Swindon and on the following day went to Wootton Bassett on the southern extremity of an island of hills about five miles to the west.

Wootton is a small town of great antiquity. It was known as Wootton Vetus or Old Wootton, and got its name from the family of Bassett who named so many places in the county. The only thing we know of them here is that in 1266 Philip Bassett and Thomas Gayton, the rector, founded a Hospital or Priory for the aged which, in Henry IV.'s time, disappeared, its lands being given to Bradenstoke Priory. Wootton to-day consists for the most part of one tiny street, and its only medieval building is the church, or rather the south aisle of it, for the rest of the building is a work of Street's in 1870. But Wootton was a considerable place in its day. From the fifteenth century to the Reform Act of 1832 it returned two Members to Parliament, and even so famous a man as Edward Hyde, afterwards Lord Clarendon, represented it.

The church is worth a visit, if only for the sake of the old panelled roof over the south aisle, the only ancient part of it. Originally there was here a nave of two aisles under the roof we see with a south porch and priest's room over it, but no chancel. That was all changed in 1870, but the old church still remains as the south aisle of the new one, and keeps its porch too. The great wall painting of which we read, which represented St. Thomas of Canterbury in the midst of his murderers, has perished.

The town hall built in 1700 and restored in 1889 is also worth seeing, but altogether Wootton must be pronounced a disappointing place, wholly dependent upon the charm, and they are wholly charming, of its surroundings for its attractiveness.

If Wootton itself has little to show us, however, it is the key to more than one delicious village which must on no account

be passed by. There are the Lydiards, for instance, and Purton.

Lydiard Tregoze, in its beautiful park, has this great distinction, I think, that it has never been sold. It began as Lydiard Ewyas and then by marriage passed to the Tregoze family, and then by marriage again and yet again, till it came in the end of the fifteenth century to Margaret Beauchamp, who brought it to Oliver St. John, and from that time to this it has remained in the same family. These St. Johns—the only famous



Town Hall, Wootton Bassett.

one of them was the first Lord Bolingbroke, the author of "The Idea of a Patriot King," one of the most gifted of English statesmen, born, though not here, in 1678—had certainly the grand manner, and though this is perhaps not visible in their house, it is in their church, for it is theirs and should bear the name of St. John rather than of our Lady.

It is not remarkable as a building, the earliest thing in it is the font, and that is of the thirteenth century; for the rest we have here a building of the end of the fourteenth century and the fifteenth and seventeenth consisting of chancel with

south chapel, nave with north and south aisles and south porch and western tower. The chapel is of the end of the fourteenth century, the nave and aisles and tower and porch of the fifteenth, the chancel a remodelling of the seventeenth century. The nave retains its original roof, and across the chancel arch is an interesting Jacobean oak screen with the arms of James I. carved on each side. The pews date from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But to say this is to give no idea at all of the church. Its splendour lies altogether in its adornment, and this is due to the St. John family.

To begin with, consider the magnificent railing and gates enclosing the sanctuary, superb seventeenth century metal work of Italian workmanship, and what is more, made for this position. Nothing in all Wiltshire can compare with these beautiful gates, which are adorned in the centre of each with the monogram S.J., most cunningly contrived with the crest of the house on either side, above wreaths and cherubs' heads. The whole is rich beyond compare and impossible of description; it must be seen to be appreciated, so fine and so elaborate is the workmanship.

But this is not all. The windows are full of fine old heraldic glass with angels singing Gloria in Excelsis Deo, saints and bishops and kings, which cannot be matched in the county any more than can these gates. Consider the east window, in which we see the figure of Oliver St. John with an olive tree—a rebus upon his name—from the branches of which are suspended like strange rich fruit the arms of those ladies whose fortunes have enriched the St. John family, and—a medieval touch—with St. John Baptist standing on a crown, and St. John Evangelist, on either side, as patrons of the house. Where in the world are we to find such a window as this? Then against the north wall of the chancel stands a cabinet containing the full-lengths of Sir John St. John and his wife, Lucy Hungerford, and their son (another Sir John) and his wife, Anne Leighton, with their six daughters. It was this second Sir John who remodelled the chancel in the year 1615 and erected this memorial of his parents, himself and children. Underneath are the following lines:—

"When Conquering William was by force of sword
The possessions of this land, called Britain's land,
Of Lydiard then was Tregoz only Lord
Whose heir to Tregoz linckt in marriage band;

That Tregoz, a great baron in his age,
By her had issue the Lord Grauntson's wife ;
Whose daughter Patshull took in marriage,
And Beauchamp theirs ; which Beauchamp's happy life
Was blessed with a daughter whence did spring
An heir to St. John, who did Lydiard bring.
Thus course of time, by God's almighty power,
Hath kept this land of Lydiard in one race
Five hundred forty nine years, and now no more,
Where at this day is St. John's dwelling-place ;
Noe ! Noe ! he dwells in heaven, whose anchored faith
Fixed on God accounted life but death."

The church is, indeed, full of their monuments. Was I not right when I said the church was dedicated to the honour rather of St. John than of our Lady ?

Aubrey speaks of certain paintings in the church, and these were discovered and cleared of whitewash in 1901. Four subjects appear on the north wall of the nave over the arches, the subjects save that of the first, which is said to represent the martyrdom of St. Thomas of Canterbury, are obscure, however. Over the door inside the south porch is another—the head of our Lord ; and on the pillar of the south aisle facing this door is another, representing the Resurrection. They all appear to be work of the fifteenth century, as do those figures of our Lord and our Lady at the north door.

There cannot be a greater contrast to all this splendour than the charming poverty of the church of the neighbouring village, Lydiard Millicent. Here is just a quiet church of the late fourteenth century, for the most part, but after Lydiard Tregoze you cannot but realise that there is nothing to see. And yet how charming it is, this little church with its nave of three bays, its south aisle and porch and western tower ; its quiet chancel and old twelfth century font with a few fragments of ancient glass even yet in its windows, spoilt if at all by the modern reredos and vast pulpit—surely a belated attempt to rival the splendours of Lydiard Tregoze by some naïve spirit of yesterday unaware of the mastery that makes that church in spite of its boasting a thing of beauty and delight.

And so I went on over the hill to Purton. Purton—Periton—Pear tree enclosure, they say ; yet it is not remarkable for pear trees now, but for one of the most beautiful of the many beautiful churches that are to be found within this county. Here as at

Little Hinton and Castle Eaton we have a church with a central tower and steeple and a western tower also. But the church here quite outdoes in delight that of Little Hinton. Purton belonged to Malmesbury Abbey until the Dissolution, and that may perhaps account for the enchanting splendour of the church. After that revolution, which more than anything else that has happened since changed the face of England, part of Purton came to Mr. Henry Hyde, father of the famous Lord Chancellor Clarendon, who was often here in early life. Mr. Hyde's house is still to be seen, and there, according to Aubrey, Anne Hyde was born.

But to return to the church. This is dedicated in honour of our Lady, and is not only a very beautiful but a complete and symmetrical building consisting of chancel with south chapel and north sacristy, transepts with tower and spire over the crossing, nave with north and south aisles and south porch, and western tower.

The central tower points to a twelfth century building, but practically nothing of this remains. To the thirteenth century belong the round piers of the nave arcades with their capitals and bases, the capitals of the north arcade being the richer. The present chancel, save the east wall, which is a modern rebuilding, is also of this time, and the Early English piscina remains in the south wall.

To the fourteenth century belongs the south chancel chapel, and the east window there is a most exquisite work in the Decorated style, as is the piscina in the south wall. The central tower, spire and transepts are also of this time, but a little later. They show the transition from Decorated to Perpendicular. The transepts still keep their original roofs.

In the fifteenth century much work was done; the whole nave was transformed, the Early English piers being raised, the old capitals re-used, and the whole work accomplished in a very feeble way. The north and south aisles as we see them were then built and the south porch erected. The latter and the south aisle have their original roofs, and everywhere we can see fragments of the earlier fourteenth century aisles in the windows and doorways. For instance, note the west window of the north aisle and the niche in the south porch. This south porch is a large and fine one of two bays with a parvise over.

The western tower is a splendid one of the best Perpendicular

time. It is in four stages and grandly pinnacled, each pinnacle being crocketed and pierced, the beautiful parapet being a pierced one also. On the second stage of the west front of the tower are three most lovely niches, and one each in the north and south. They all have crocketed canopies of lovely design and workmanship. These niches became a special feature of the church, and at the time the tower was built similar niches were placed on either side of the new east window then inserted. The whole chancel was indeed renewed in the fifteenth century, and the sedilia and sacristy added.

Without, under the east window is a beautiful sculptured relief which Aubrey failed to recognise as an Annunciation. It measures 15½ inches in height by 13 inches in width. It is of the fourteenth century.

But the most wonderful thing in the church is the font. This has been mutilated, but remains a very precious thing. It is tub-shaped, 2 feet 9 inches in diameter at the top, where it is richly ornamented in relief. Below under an arcade stand ten figures trampling upon ten prostrate forms. Eight of them represent virtues stamping under foot the contrary vices, the other two are the church trampling down the Serpent and St. Raphael standing on a rock. The names of all are written upon the arches and upon the background beneath. This is one of the most remarkable works in the county.

From Stanton I went on to Highworth which well deserves its name, for it stands up over 400 feet above the sea and affords everywhere a great view, north, south, east and west, and the highest thing in it is its church, very properly dedicated in honour of St. Michael, who loves all high places. Have I not seen his shrine, the oldest of all, in the mountain of Gargano?

The old town of Highworth, for it is very ancient, was a royal demesne at the time of the Domesday Survey, and though there is nothing left in it as old as that, the very form of its church tells us that it is a successor to one cruciform with a central tower erected soon after that period. Doubtless Highworth played its part in medieval England, but we know almost nothing of it till the days of the Great Rebellion, when the very church of St. Michael, who, after all, is a great captain, was fortified and held for the king, but, alas! was taken by Fairfax in 1645. And to-day you may see there one of the rebel's cannon balls which struck the tower. "The soldiers," we read, "had good booty

in the church, took 70 prisoners and 80 arms." For all this they paid dear enough a few weeks later. Many fell and were buried in a field to the west of the church where their bones were found years ago. The town still happily possesses several fine old houses of this time, or a few years later. Two are dated 1652 and 1656, the former a very dignified building with two fine two-storeyed bays with stone mullions and a doorway with remains or indications, rather, of an arch over it.

Of the church there is not much to be said. It is obviously of the fifteenth century, successor of a Norman building, and is very complete and dignified. In the chancel are three fifteenth century stalls with miserere seats, and the pulpit is a spoilt one of the Elizabethan time. But the great treasure here is the medieval chalice and paten of 1534. The chalice is inscribed: "BEATE QUI AUDIUNT VERBUM DEI UT CUSTODIANT ILLUD." This round the Cup. Upon the base we read: "IHU XPE FILI DEI VIVI MISERERE NOBIS." In place of the Crucifix on the foot is a seated figure almost nude with crossed legs holding a palm branch: obviously the Man of Sorrows or the Crowning with Thorns. The paten is not dated and is perfectly plain.

I slept at Highworth and on the following morning went to Hannington and on to Castle Eaton.

Hannington is a delicious village built, as they tell you, in the form of a capital Y. It boasts a noble old Elizabethan mansion in a fine park, and its church of St. John Baptist has a thirteenth century nave with later windows, a coeval doorway on the north and two lancet windows, a fourteenth century south porch with a curious niche in the east wall of it, and a fifteenth century tower and chancel, the latter with a good Perpendicular east window. In the tower are several monuments.

Hannington was the birthplace in 1638 of Narcissus March, primate of Ireland, upon whom Swift reflected so severely, though he owed his preferment to him. Perhaps he had read the Bishop's "Essay touching the Sympathy between Lute or Viol Strings."

Castle Eaton is four miles north of Hannington in the meadows by the infant Thames, a beautiful and a great place. The church is interesting. It consists of nave with north aisle, south porch, western tower, chancel, north chapel with filled up crypt beneath it. On the east end of the nave is a spired turret for the Sanctus bell.

Only the doorways of the nave remain of the twelfth century church that stood here, with the font; they all date 1170–1180. The church was rebuilt apparently in the thirteenth century; at any rate, the chancel with the chancel arch is of that time, and it is a beautiful work with a good triple lancet east window, the central light being higher than its fellows, all contained



Hannington Hall.

within a round arch. Three single lancets remain in the south wall, where there is also a beautiful piscina.

The nave was built before the end of the century, and to this time belongs not only the three-light window west of the porch, but the piscina in the south wall, and the charming turret over the east end of the nave with its octagonal stone spire. The north chapel, the gem of the church, is Decorated work of the fourteenth century. It has been mutilated by the filling up of the crypt and the lowering of the floor. The windows are interesting and charming. To the south of the double light east window is a most curious corbel representing a bishop as

a monkey seated with one knee over the other, his bearded head on his hand.

The tower is Perpendicular, and so are the south porch and north aisle. Here is a wall painting of the Blessed Virgin. The pulpit is Elizabethan with additions from the old rood screen.

Now, when I had seen all this, I went on through the lingering summer afternoon beside the childish Thames to the noble town of Cricklade in the meads.

CHAPTER XXI

CRICKLADE AND THE VILLAGES OF THE ISIS

Cricklade upon the Isis, or the Thames, that "upperest Thames" which William Morris loved so well, is a place one may think as old as any in our island. Before the beginning of history men knew it and spoke of it, we may suppose; though not as the abode of certain Greek philosophers, as tradition will have it,[1] and as Drayton records:—

> . . "Greeklade, whose great name yet vaunts that learned tongue
> Where to Great Britain first the sacred muses songe
> Which first were here at Isis bounteous head
> As telling that her fame should through the world be spread
> And tempted by this flood to Oxford after came
> There likewise to delight her bridegroom, lovely Tame,
> Whose beauty when they saw so much did they adore
> That Greeklade they forsook and would go back no more."

Cricklade stands upon the Roman road from Cirencester to Speen, where it finds the infant Thames, and was probably a Roman town or station. At any rate, many Roman coins have been found there, and Roman bricks, too, in the restoration of St. Mary's church in 1862; while at Latton close by, on the other side of the river, a mosaic pavement of black, white and red chequers was brought to light in the seventeenth century; and, besides coins, a Roman coffin was found in 1861.

But it was not the Romans who gave the place the name it bears, but the Saxons. They called it Crecca-gelad, or Stone ford, and probably its British name was not very different. It is in Saxon times that it first became famous in our history.

[1] One legend says that it was Brutus who, in 1180 B.C., brought certain learned Trojans here; another asserts that it was Penda of Mercia who here established a university in 650 A.D. Others talk of a school founded by Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury, 669-90.

There, some think, was the spot where St. Augustine met the Welsh bishops by the oak called St. Augustine's, when they debated about the time the feast of Easter should befall.[1]

There in 905 down the Roman way came the Danes ravaging, took the ford and burnt the town, and there again in 1016 Cnut himself plundered. With the Conquest and the ordering of England, the re-entry of our country into a strong European administration, Cricklade fades from the page of history, and all we really know of it is that in the wars of Stephen, as holding the ford, it was held against the king by William of Dores, and when he was gone on the Crusade, by his son Philip, who burnt and plundered all this countryside.

The fact that Cricklade stood on a great Roman highway and at a ford explains its miseries, and explains, too, how it is that, old as it is, it has, after all, so little to show for it; in neither of its churches is there, so far as I can see, a single stone earlier than the twelfth century.

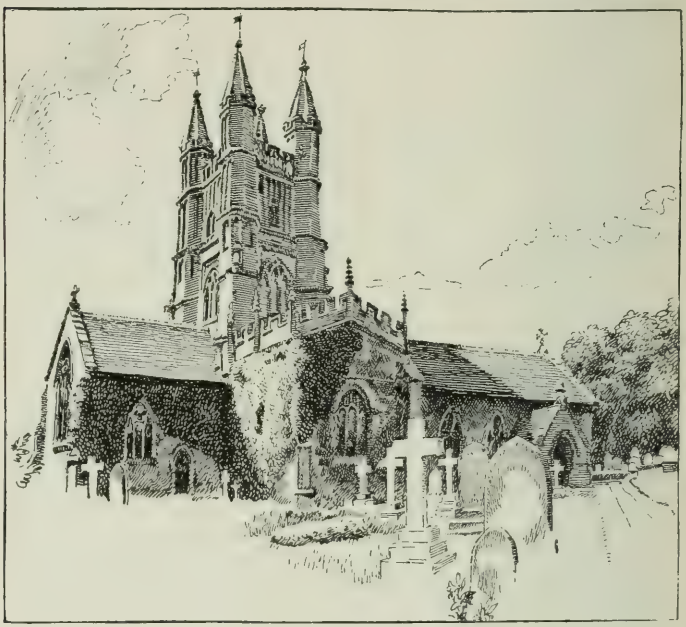
The glory of Cricklade is the wonderfully picturesque church of St. Sampson. This church is not dedicated in honour of the Old Testament hero, as, for instance, S. Giobbe in Venice is dedicated in honour of the patient Job, but of St. Sampson of Dol in Brittany, born in 465, who, according to the legend, was a leader in the school or university of Cricklade.[2] Nothing, of course, which we have in the church to-day is anything like so old as that—a hundred years before St. Austin set out from Rome to convert the English; but that a church stood on the site of St. Sampson's at a very early period we may be sure, and the two stones now over the inner doorway of the north porch confirm us in our belief that a church was standing here in the tenth century.

Save these two stones, however, nothing of it remains. The present building, which is cruciform, consisting of chancel with south chapel, transepts, a central tower, nave with north and south aisles and north porch, dates at earliest from the twelfth century.

[1] This has the testimony of the Bishop of Bristol (Dr. Browne); see his lectures on St. Augustine and his companions. Cricklade was on the Roman Way and a sort of half-way house for the two parties. If there was a school or monastery (the church of Cricklade belonged to the Abbey of Westminster) here, it would have served to accommodate them. A farm in the parish is still known as Gospel Oak Farm.

[2] There was a relic of St. Sampson at Malmesbury Abbey.

It is the eastern part of the nave arcades, two bays in the north and one on the south, which dates from this time; this is Transitional work, about 1180, according to Mr. Ponting. The west end of the arcades is later—the work on the south being completely Early English and not earlier than 1240; but the curious width and the height of the bases assure us that



St. Sampson's, Cricklade.

what we see is founded upon earlier work. The whole church seems to have been rebuilt at this time. For the south aisle too, which was rebuilt in 1865, dates also from the middle of the thirteenth century. The north aisle is later, as we see it, and was apparently rebuilt late in the fourteenth century, when its eastern end was dedicated as a chantry chapel. The whole aisle is still known as the Widhill aisle. The canopied altar-tomb there is of this time as is the mutilated effigy upon it

which not many years ago was lying in the churchyard. At the same time the chancel was rebuilt: the priest's door alone remains of the thirteenth century. The east window is modern.

The transepts were rebuilt in the fifteenth century: the north transept, however, retains its thirteenth century east wall, in which is a single lancet. The south transept has been rebuilt in modern times, but retains a fine Decorated piscina in the east wall.

The south or Hungerford Chapel dates from the end of the fifteenth century. It was built by Sir Edmund Hungerford (d. 1484), who was the first of that family to live here at Down Ampney. It is the finest piece of work in the church. The east window is good Perpendicular and has an elaborate niche on either side of it, the south niche bears the initial of the founder, "H"—the north, the monogram of our Lady, M.R. (Maria Regina), in whose honour doubtless the chapel was erected;[1] but all the excellent work here has been spoilt by scraping. An Elizabethan communion table occupies the place of the altar. This chapel seems to have been strengthened and supported in the sixteenth century when the detached buttress and flying arch were erected. To this age too belong the porch and the wonderfully picturesque central tower (1551–3) dated by the rich heraldry upon it. The whole is elaborate, and as I say, picturesque; but coarse, especially in the details which are so numerous.

The incomplete cross in the churchyard is the old market cross.

The other church in Cricklade, St. Mary's, is a later foundation, but an earlier building than St. Sampson's. It is very small and consists of chancel with north chapel and nave, with north and south aisles, south porch beautiful with ivy, and western tower. The finest thing here is the splendid Norman chancel arch sculptured upon its western face, a work of the first half of the twelfth century. It is all that is left of the Norman church that certainly stood here, and must have been a very fine piece of work. In the thirteenth century, at the end of it, the church was rebuilt. To this time belong the two lower stages of the tower, with its lancets in the middle stage and the western

[1] Such is the general view which Mr. Keating endorses. But it should be noted that the monogram may very well be M.B., and refer not to the B.V.M., but to Sir Edmund's wife, who was Margery Barnel.

lancet in the lowest; the top stage was added early in the fifteenth century.

The nave as we see it is also a rebuilding of the fifteenth century, and so is the small north chancel chapel, but the chancel itself looks like a rebuilding in modern times of thirteenth century work. The pulpit is Jacobean.

The churchyard cross here is a very fine one on an octagonal shaft. The head is sculptured but has been knocked off and wrongly replaced. There we see on the north a Bishop with his crosier, on the south the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, on the east the Annunciation, and on the west the Crucifixion. It must surely be the case that the Crucifixion would have faced east and towards the roadway.

Upon the north bank of the Isis a mile to the east of the town are the remains of a hospital or priory for poor folk founded in 1231 by Guarin the chaplain. In 1547 there still remained here this hospital, the patron being as ever the Bishop of Salisbury.

I left Cricklade regretfully very early one morning, and came on my way to the very beautiful village of Ashton Keynes. This is a little paradise with flowing waters everywhere, and fine trees and flowers and charming cottages and old houses, a place of quietness immersed in a long peace. And the whole village, I know not why, is scattered with ruined crosses. There are no fewer than four of them beside another in the churchyard, yet why they are here, close to the frontier of the county let it be said, I cannot say nor could anyone explain it to me.

The church of Ashton Keynes dedicated in honour of the Holy Cross stands at the end of a great avenue of old elms which is far lovelier than itself. And yet the church is of a great antiquity, but it has suffered too much from the accursed restorer ever to be loved quite frankly or wholeheartedly without an afterthought as one loves the trees which are what they are.

The church to which I am in danger of being unfair consists of nave and aisles of four bays, north and south porches, chancel with north chapel, and a western tower. Originally a Transitional Norman building stood here, as the fine font of that time suggests. Of that church the nave arcade remains, and the earlier part of it is the two eastern bays on the north. The north aisle seems at first to have been only a chapel, but it was soon extended, as the rest of the arcade here assures us.

It is when we come to the chancel arch that we remember the

trees. It is a hopeless fraud. It masquerades as twelfth century work, and yet it is dated all over by incompetence—1876. It



Old Cross and Church of St. Saviour's, Cricklade.

is, nevertheless, what the clergy and the architects call a restoration: in other words it is a lie and a vandalism, and as such I say no more about it. The chancel, which was once of the early

thirteenth century, has suffered, though not so meanly. At least it is not a forgery.

One turns away, however, from its sophistication to the beautiful double chapel on the north, opening into the chancel under a double arch. This is of the end of the thirteenth century, though the east window is of the fifteenth, and the roof of the seventeenth century.

The north aisle which had been built, as I have said, in all its length in the end of the twelfth century, was wholly rebuilt in the middle of the fourteenth century, and the fine middle window in the north wall is of that time. The west window is also Perpendicular. At the east end of this aisle, above the arch into the chapel, is a very lovely triptych. In the midst is a solid mandorla, and above it the symbols of the Four Evangelists ; on either side is a canopied niche. The whole is of great beauty, and possibly stood over the Lady altar. The south aisle, in which there is a good Perpendicular window, was rebuilt soon after the north aisle, and both still keep their fourteenth century roofs, as does the nave, which seems to have been re-roofed at the time these aisles were built. The north porch and the tower of three storeys are also of the fourteenth century. It thus appears that we have here a church containing much Decorated work, and yet it makes far less impression upon us than we might expect.

In the Perpendicular window in the south aisle are some fragments of fifteenth century glass. There we see a Blessed Trinity, God the Father, holding the Crucifix upon His knees, His right hand in benediction ; but the brooding Dove is missing. Another fragment shows us a figure with a model of the church in his hand. I suppose this is the founder.

Without, beyond the trees, stands a fine old barn, possibly of the sixteenth century.

A couple of miles to the south of Ashton lies the Leigh, where, till 1899, stood one of the most interesting, and, though dilapidated, one of the most charming little churches in North Wiltshire. But it was not to remain. The place was wet and difficult to reach for the badness of the road in winter time, so, instead of mending the road, the church was destroyed, the nave, porch and turret pulled down and rebuilt on another site, and the chancel left to its fate as a mortuary chapel. Before this was done, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

urged the Wiltshire Archæological Society to protest and to save the little old church. It will hardly be credited that after discussion this learned body decided to do nothing! So the vandals had their way. The archdeacon—I am sorry I do not know his name—conferred, we are told, with the vicar and parishioners and then reported that to repair and continue the fabric in use in its old position "would be very adverse to the interests of the church,[1] if not impossible," and he proposed to Mr. C. E. Ponting, F.S.A., who had done everything he could to save the church, to remove the nave, porch and stones to a new site. This was done, and no doubt with the most loving care, by Mr. Ponting, who had publicly and earnestly counselled the improvement of the offending road, the construction, if need be, of other means of access rather than the destruction of a church he knew and had studied with pleasure and enthusiasm. It is a sad and disgraceful story, typical of too much that is being achieved by fools all over England. We call the Germans barbarians for destroying Rheims Cathedral; but how are we better than they, though we err from stupidity, they from brutishness? And they, too, will promise to re-erect Rheims even as we have done the little church of All Saints at the Leigh; but shall we be content with what they re-build? As content as we are with the nineteenth century "Norman" of Ashton Keynes. However, we must make the best of it. Mr. Ponting has done his work well, and the new church is worth visiting to-day, if only for the sake of its unique roof.[2]

From the Leigh I went on over the meads by the highway, and just beyond Minety Station turned off to the right to see Minety, where Pepys said Sir William Penn was born, for that family, which had been hereditary stewards to the Abbots of Malmesbury, lived here. The place is worth seeing, not only for its own sake, for it is pretty enough, but especially for the sake of the fine fifteenth century screens and Jacobean seats and pulpit and desk in the church, to say nothing of the fragments of a Saxon cross shaft. Also there is here in the north aisle a seventeenth century brass to Nicholas Powlett (d. 1620), a

[1] If Mr. Archdeacon meant the Church Militant, I cannot argue with him; if it is the building he refers to, how can you serve the interests of anything or anyone by destroying it or him?

[2] Mr. Ponting gives a very full account of this church before the re-building in *W.A.M.* xxvii. 121 *et seq.*

nephew of that Amyas Powlett who was gaoler of Mary Queen of Scots.

From Minety I went on two miles or more northward to Oaksey, the Wochisie of Domesday Book, a name derived, they say, from Wuxi—a sheepfold of wattles. Aubrey, however, had the oaks in his mind, and does not forget to tell us how "admirably well wooded" the place was with "the best oakes in the county." The place is not without its fame. Here the Bohuns had a great castellated house, which passed by marriage to the Duchy of Lancaster. Here "time honoured Lancaster" may well have been, and it is likely that Henry Bolingbroke, the usurper, was often at Oaksey; but of their grand old house, which stood away to the south of the church, nothing at all remains, I think.

The church of All Saints is not remarkable, save for the numerous fragments it possesses of its old fourteenth century glass. It consists of clerestoried nave, south aisle of three bays, chancel, south chapel, and western tower. The nave arcade is of the middle of the thirteenth century; and, indeed, the walls of the aisle, south porch and chancel and the two lower stages of the tower are of this time, with the two lancets in the aisle and those in the north wall of the chancel. Then late in the thirteenth century a Decorated window was inserted near the east end of the aisle. The north wall of the nave was rebuilt and the porch there erected in the end of the fourteenth century, and there is a niche over the inner doorway here with a spoiled figure of this time.

Then in the middle of the fifteenth century the church was restored and added to. The clerestory was built with its curious effect in the north side of the church, which has thus two stages of windows, as there is no aisle here; the upper stage of the tower was added, and a chapel was built to the south of the chancel. This chapel, which is not structurally divided from the aisle, is separated from it to-day by a part of the old rood screen—a fine piece of work.

When all is said, however, it is the old glass that is the delight of the church. This is to be seen in the windows of the nave, and in the Decorated window in the aisle. Here in the nave is a kneeling figure, a woman in a red robe with the inscription: SCE NICHOLAS ORA PRO NOBIS and various other fragments; there is another kneeling figure, a man also in a red robe but

without a readable inscription. In the aisle we see St. Anne with the little Blessed Virgin, St. Catherine with her wheel, and other figures.

From Oaksey I went on through Eastchurch, where there is a fine old manor house of the Earles of Bristol, to Crudwell, where I was told there was more old glass.

Crudwell is an ancient place as old as Oaksey. In Domesday Book it appears as Credewell, and in 850 had been given by Ethelwult to the Abbey of Malmesbury. At the Dissolution it was bought by John "Count" of Oxford I read. I suppose this was John de Vere, sixteenth Earl of Oxford. He did not hold it long, for in 1599 Sir Thomas Lucas was both patron of the church and lord of the manor. Aubrey tells us that a great gate of the manor house was standing in his day, and adds that a large barn had just been pulled down. I fancy he meant this the other way about, for the large barn is still standing.

The church of All Saints consists of clerestoried nave with aisles, chancel with aisles and tower at the west end, to the south of which is a modern baptistery. On the north is a Norman doorway which has been blocked. The north arcade is late twelfth century, the chancel arch is not much later, and the chancel is Early English. There are some fine old benches which Aubrey speaks of as "the best and most substantiall I know anywhere." But the best thing in the church is the old glass in a Perpendicular window in the north aisle. Here in the midst we see our Lord in Benediction, and about Him five of the seven Sacraments of the Church—Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, Orders, and Extreme Unction; a wonderful thing to find here by the wayside after four hundred years.

Ten miles to the north of Crudwell on the western side of the Fosse Way and quite on the Gloucestershire border is Ashley, which is worth a visit, though rather out of the way, for the sake of its old church of St. James. This is a small building consisting of chancel with modern vestry to the south, nave with south aisle, south porch and western tower. The church is notable for its very fine Norman south doorway and chancel arch, both not later than 1120. The doorway is especially fine and has a square opening with lintel and tympanum, all diapered with stars in a regular pattern. The chancel arch is less fine, but the western face also repeats this diapering. The south aisle is the narrowest I have seen, and as we see it is a work of

about 1220. It is divided from the nave by an arcade of three bays, the pillars of which have carved capitals, but the bases are now hidden by the floor. The font is of the fourteenth century, the tower of the fifteenth, though it is so covered with ivy that only the upper part can be seen. The chancel is modern. There, however, is a curious piscina of the fourteenth century on a shaft, whose base is like a corbel carved as a man's head.

I returned to Crudwell in the late afternoon, and as evening fell made my way through the beautiful meadows about Charlton Park till I came at last to that fortress once so holy and renowned through the world—Malmesbury.

CHAPTER XXII

THE VALLEY OF THE WESTERN AVON
MALMESBURY AND ITS VILLAGES

At Malmesbury I had come out of the valley of the Isis into the valley of the western Avon, the Bristol Avon, as we say, and thus, without knowing it, had passed over one of the fundamental, but imperceptible watersheds of England, for the Isis becomes the Thames and flows into the North Sea, but the Avon into the Severn, the Bristol Channel.

But though we may thus pass so decisive a feature of the geography of England without perceiving it, no one has ever come to Malmesbury without being impressed by its dramatic situation. The place is a natural fortress. It stands crowned by its ruined Abbey church a mighty fragment of Norman work on a steep precipitous hill surrounded by the Avon and its tributaries, save for a narrow peninsula to the north-west, a wholly impregnable stronghold and even unapproachable in mediæval times, when the meads and meadows were mere swamps, and the only hard road was the Roman Fosse Way, which passed three miles westward, between Bath and Chichester. Such a place, must, one may think, have been inhabited and held in the earliest times long before the beginning of history, but the only evidence we have of this is the circular mound and small earthwork on Cains Hill towards Cole Park: in Malmesbury itself there is nothing either of the prehistoric or the Roman times, though of the latter we have evidence in the small station at Brockenburgh, two miles to the north-west, and in the villa at Easton Grey four miles due west, both within a mile, though on different sides of, the Fosse Way.

We have, it is true, the tradition that in prehistoric times this hill was known as Caer Bladon, and we know that it was first

called by the Saxons Ingleburne ; but the earliest record of any sort that we have of Malmesbury is that preserved for us by one of



Malmesbury Abbey.

her more illustrious sons, William of Malmesbury, the chronicler. It concerns the foundation of the monastery in 640. "This

monastery," he tells us, "was endowed by Maildulph, a Scot (Irishman) as they say, by nation, a philosopher by erudition and a monk by profession, and so slenderly withal that its members could scarcely procure their daily subsistence." To the monastery Ina sent his nephew Aldhelm to study, and this great man who is said to have pursued his studies in the schools of Hadrian the African and at Roman Canterbury, and was not only learned in music, but the first of the Saxons who wrote and enjoyed Latin, and was presently to be canonised as a saint, became head of the house in 672. Leutherius (Bishop of Winchester) after long and due deliberation gave the monastery to Aldhelm, a monk of the same place, to be by him governed with the authority then possessed by bishops. Of which matter that my relation may obviate every doubt I shall subjoin his own words:—

"I, Leutherius by divine permission, Bishop supreme of the Saxon See, am requested by the Abbots who, within the jurisdiction of our diocese, preside over the conventual assemblies of monks with pastoral anxiety, to give and to grant that portion of land called Maildulfesburgh to Aldhelm, the priest, for the purpose of leading a life according to strict rule; in which place, indeed, from his earliest infancy and first initiation in the study of learning, he has been instructed in the liberal arts and passed his days nurtured in the bosom of Holy Mother Church; and, on which account, fraternal love appears principally to have conceived this request; wherefore, assenting to the petition of the aforesaid abbots, I willingly grant that place to him and his successors who shall sedulously follow the laws of the holy institution. Done publicly near the river Bladon[1] this eighth before the kalends of September in the year of Our Lord's Incarnation 672."

It is obvious from this that Aldhelm was the real founder of the monastery of Malmesbury. Aldhelm, the champion of the Roman system of education against the Irish or Celtic system, one of the chief of those to whom is due the final triumph of Roman over Celtic Christianity. It was he who introduced a regular rule here, and, as William of Malmesbury goes on to say, "the affairs of the monastery began to flourish exceedingly;

[1] The river Bladon was surely the Avon, the river of Bladud the legendary founder of Bath, in Roman and in Saxon times by far the most important place upon it.

monks came to him from all sides, there was a general concourse to Aldhelm . . . his piety exceeded even his reputation . . . he had so fully imbibed the liberal arts that he was wonderful in each of them and unrivalled in all." Aldhelm enlarged the old church of Maildulf and rededicated it in honour of St. Saviour, St. Peter and St. Paul; and close by he built a dwelling for his monks, while not far away he built two new churches and dedicated them respectively in honour of our Lady and of St. Michael.[1] All this was done in 705, when upon the death of Bishop Hedda, the See of Dorchester was divided; Aldhelm became Bishop of Sherborne, and in 709 he died at Doulting, his body being borne in slow procession all the way to Malmesbury, where it was buried in the church of St. Michael; and we read that the monks then removed from the church of St. Saviour and came to St. Mary's to be nearer the body of their great founder, which in 837 King Ethelwulf caused to be enclosed in a silver shrine.

The place, however, had before then suffered much. In 740 Offa had seized it, as did Ealstan of Sherborne later. Then in King Alfred's days the monastery was burnt to the ground. It was rebuilt from the foundations, we are told, by King Athelstan, who in 941, having also greatly enriched the church, not only with lands but with relics, among them a piece of the True Cross, a Thorn from the Crown of Thorns, and the bones of St. Sampson,[2] was buried "under the altar of St. Mary in the Tower," and it was to St. Mary's that in 955 Dunstan removed the shrine of St. Aldhelm, causing the bones, for fear of the Danes, to be buried on the north side of the altar. And for love of St. Aldhelm, who loved music, we read, St. Dunstan gave to the church an organ with pipes of metal. In the time of Abbot Elfric (977–82) we hear of another re-building of monastery and church, but in 1042 another fire destroyed the monastery. The constant fires suggest to us that the buildings were, as we might suspect, of wood; but, on the other hand, the fact that Bishop Hermann wished to translate his See thither from Ramsbury, and this before the fire of 1042, would confirm us in the belief that Malmesbury was by far the richest and most considerable religious house in the diocese. Hermann is said to

[1] These groups of churches are characteristic of the time; the same thing was done at Glastonbury, a much older and holier foundation.

[2] This relic accounts for the dedication of the church at Cricklade.

have built a tower at Malmesbury, but he did not succeed in having his wish, as we know, and retired abroad in consequence.

That the monastery was restored after the fire of 1042 is certain. After the Norman Conquest we find a Norman abbot installed, Thorold of Fécamp, and when he was given Peterborough in 1070 he was succeeded by Warin de Lyra, who replaced the bones of St. Aldhelm in their shrine. Whether these had lain buried since Dunstan hid them from the Danes or whether they had been buried again lest the Normans should steal them away, we do not know.

Then in 1118 came the great Bishop Roger. What Herman had failed to do he did, for William of Malmesbury tells us that "the most ancient monasteries of Malmesbury and Abbotsbury he annexed as far as he was able to his See." He also, as in so many other places, built a castle to the east of the town to hold it and the monks in awe of him; but when he fell, and in 1130 died, the house regained its freedom and its rights. It was probably before this time, during the life and residence of William of Malmesbury within the abbey, that the great church, a part of which we still see, was built and probably by Bishop Roger. In 1142 the year of the historian's death, it was complete and he tells us that "in size and beauty it exceeded any other religious edifice in England."[1] When we consider what Winchester must have been, what Reading was, and Durham is, not to mention Tewkesbury and Gloucester, we can obtain some idea of what we have lost.

Other work, we know not what, was carried out after 1216, when King John granted to the abbey "the place in which is set the castle of Malmesbury with leave to pull down the Castle and to build there at will." A little later the sanctuary of the abbey church was lengthened as we know, and probably this was paid for by the offerings of the pilgrims at St. Aldhelm's shrine. In 1260 the monastery itself was rebuilt in great part by Abbot William of Colerne, who erected a new hall and a chapel

[1] Mr. Brakespear, who knows more of the church than any other living person, for he has been engaged for years upon the repair of it and has had exceptional opportunities for the study of the structure, considers that William of Malmesbury here refers to the older building, which was, I suppose, that of Abbot Elfin (1077–82). But by then Gloucester, which William of Malmesbury must have seen, had been finished twenty years at least. How could a work of Saxon times compare to its advantage with such a building, as William of Malmesbury says the Abbey did?

of St. Aldhelm in the garden, and remodelled the Chapter House and the dorter with other works, and in 1284 the water conduit, of which Leland speaks, saying that it brought the Newton water to the house, was laid down.

In the fourteenth century, Mr. Brakespear tells us, the central tower was raised and a spire added to it. The clerestories were remodelled and the transepts and nave vaulted; and later still a square tower was built over the two western bays of the nave. While in the fifteenth century the south aisle of the nave was re-erected and the cloister was built.

So the great church stood, 326 feet long by 160 feet wide across the transepts, its abbot mitred, a great noble with a seat in the House of Lords since the days of Edward III., when upon December 15, 1539, Henry VIII. suppressed it, and received the surrender of the abbot, Robert Frampton, and twenty-one monks. It was the last religious house in Wiltshire to fall.

It is most enlightening to read the accounts of what befell. The site and buildings were given to Sir Edward Baynton of Bromham, but the *church, cloister and chapel were considered superfluous* with much else, and were ordered to be destroyed, and for the purpose were sold to William Stumpe, "an exceeding rich clothier." The abbots' lodging and stables, and the gate-house with other buildings were to remain. William Stumpe had paid £1,117 15*s.* 11*d.* for the church and its dependent buildings. He now proposed to make a profit on the transaction, as his master Henry had certainly done. He tore down towers, sanctuary and transept and sold the stone, but in the "little church joining the south side of the transept," and in the monastic buildings he set up his looms, using the "fair square tour in the west ende" of the church for a dwelling. Moreover, he utterly destroyed the priceless library which had been gathered ever since St. Aldhelm ruled here. And to keep the people of Malmesbury quiet this Stumpe "was the chief causer and contractor to have the Abbey chirch made a Paroch Chirch." In few, the parish church of St. Paul having fallen down he gave the nave, ruined as it was, of the old abbey to the parishioners. What a mind have we here, how excellent in action, how subtle in contrivance, how admirable in forethought, above all how modern! So Whiggish is this Stumpe that men have exclaimed "O generous Stumpe"; and all men have been convinced

that he foresaw almost an Anglican Cathedral; but Leland knew that "this Stumpe entendith to make a stret or 2 for clothiers in the bak vacant Ground of the Abbey *that is within the Toune wauUes*." Naturally he did not want any trouble about that, so he gave the townspeople the ruined nave. Is it not a masterpiece? But the Stumpes of this world will always be beyond criticism.

It was in the midst of Stumpe's labours that Leland came by. His account of what he saw is interesting because, as in so many other cases, it is the first we have of the place.

"The toune of *Malmesbyri*," he writes, "standith on the very toppe of a greate slaty rock, and ys wonderfully defendid by nature; for *Nexton* water cummith a 2 miles from north to the toun; and *Axon* water cummith by weste of the toune from *Lokington* a 4 miles of, and meete about a bridge at south est parte of the toun and so goith *Axon* by south a while, and then turneth flat west toward *Bristowe*.

"The conducte that cam to *Malmesbyri* abbey was fette from *Nexton*.

"*Nexton* water and *Axon* run so nere together in the botom of the west suburbe at *Malmesbyri*, that there within a burbolt shot the toun is peninsulated. In the toun be 4 gates by the namens of Est, West, North and South ruinus al.[1]

"The walles in many places stond ful up; but now very feble. Nature hath diked the toun strongely.

"It was sum tyme a castelle of great fame wher yn the toun hath syns ben buildid; for in the beginning of the *Saxons* reign, as far as I can lerne, *Malmesbyri* was no toun. This castle was namid of the *Britons*, *Caer Bladon*. The Saxons first caullid it *Inglebarne*. And after, of one *Maildulphus* a *Scotte* taught that good letters there and after procurid an abbay ther to be madee it was *Maildulphesbyri*; *i.e.*, *Maildulphi curia*.

"The King of the *West Saxons* and a Bishop of *Winchestre* were founders of this abbay.

"*Aldelmus* was then after *Maildulph* abbate there and after Bishop of *Shirborn*.

"This S. *Aldelme* is patrone of this place.

"The toune hath a great privilege of a fair about the test of *Sanct Aldelme*; at which tyme the toune kepith a band of

[1] All now utterly gone. The name of Westgate in some sort survives in the name of the suburb, as "Westport."

harnesid men to se peace kept ; and this one of the bragges of the toun, and thereby they be furnishid with harneys.

" There were in the abbay chirch yard 3 chirches. Th abbay chirch a right magnificent thing, wher were 2 steples, one that had a mightie high *pyramis* and felle daungerusly *in hominum memoria* and sins not re-edified.

" It stode in the midle of the *transeptum* of the chirch and was a marke to al the countrie about. The other yet standith, a greate square toure at the west ende of the chirch.

" The tounes men a late bought this chirch of the King and hath made it their paroche chirch. The body of the olde paroch chirch standing in the west end of the chirch yard is clene taken down. The est end is converted *in aulam civicam* (Town Hall).

" The fair square tour in the weste ende is kept for a dwelling-house.

" Ther was a little chirch joining to the south side of the *transeptum* of the abbay chirch wher sum say *Joannes Scottus* the great clerk[1] was slayne about the tyme of *Alfrede* King of *West Saxons* of his own disciples thrusting and strikking hym with their table pointelles.

" Wevers hath now lomes in this little chirch, but it stondeth and is a very old pece of work. . . .

" Malmesbyri hath a good quik market kept every *Saturday*.

" Ther is a right fair and costely peace of worke in the Market-place made al of stone, and curiously voultid for poore market folkes to stande dry when rayne cummith.

" Ther be 8 great pillers and 8 open arches ; and the work is 8 square (=octagonal) ; one great piller in the midle berith up the voulte. The men of the toune made this peace of work *in hominum memoria*.

" The hole logginges of the abbay be now longging to one *Stumpe* an exceeding riche clothier that boute them of the King. . . ."

Of all this what remains to us ? Only the beautiful octagonal Market Cross of the reign of Henry VII., forty feet high, richly sculptured and ornamented with statues and covered by a groined

[1] John Scotus or Erigena fl. 850. He was an Irishman, and this is expressly stated by Pendentius of Troyes (Migne Pat. Lat. cxv. 1194a). He was buried at first at the Gospel side of the altar in the great church, but the tomb was destroyed in the eleventh century by Abbot Warin. It may be he was murdered for teaching false doctrine. He appears to have left France under such a charge.

roof; the old "Green Dragon" inn behind it with its fourteenth century window: the tower of St. Paul's church by the abbey



yard, and a part of the nave and the noble south porch of the abbey church. The walls of the town and its gates, the walls of the precincts also, are gone, but for all our sorrow what remains is worthy of the closest inspection.

The great Norman church consisted of sanctuary with aisles and apse, transepts, with sixteen chapels, a tower over the crossing and a nave of nine bays with aisles, south porch and western tower. Of this the first six bays of the nave remain complete with another bay of the south aisle, and the south porch. The precinct upon the hill and within the town walls consisted of a walled area of six acres; the walled precinct without the town walls contained 26 acres of vineyards, farm land and buildings, mills and fishponds. The precinct within the town walls contained the church and monastery, the former standing almost in its centre with the cloister to the north and the monastic building east and west. The abbot's house was to the east of the church, where an Elizabethan house still stands, and was contained within a wall of its own, with its own gatehouse, as at Wells. The monks' cemetery was between the abbot's house and the apse of the church; the graveyard we see being then as now that of the people.

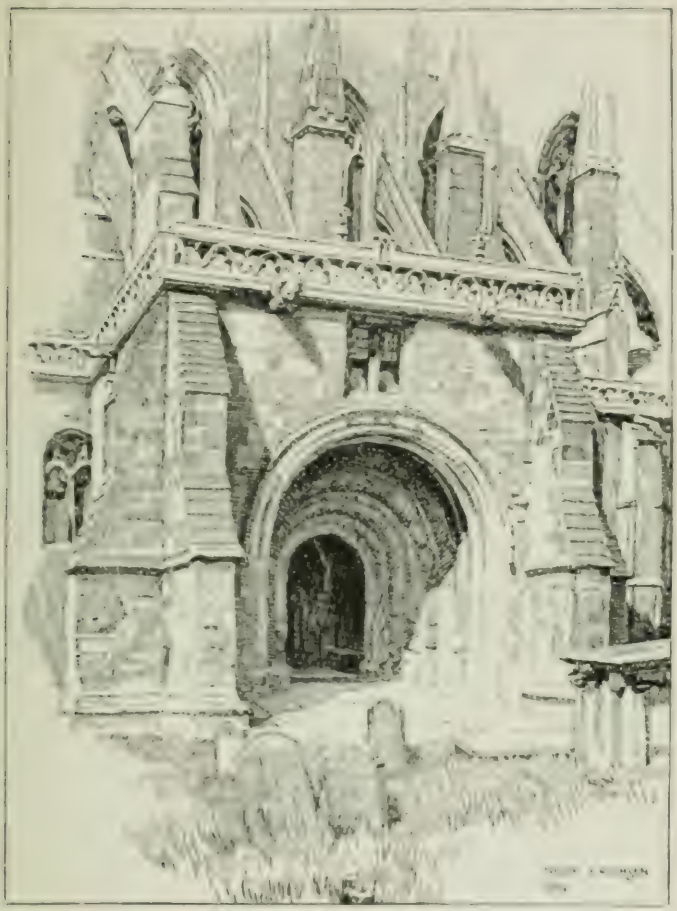
Of the presbytery, the whole eastern limb of the great church, only a fragment of the westernmost bay remains attached to the north-east pier of the crossing. It was far longer than what is left of the nave; indeed, the whole church was more than three times as long as the six bays of the nave which remain.

The south transept was 50 feet from north to south and 28 feet wide; all has perished save the west wall, which stands for two-thirds of its height, its lowest division being filled with Norman interlaced arcading and the two upper divisions that remain with round arched windows; at the south-west angle is a square turret.

Of the north transept, which was probably like the south, the southern and part of the next bay of the west wall with a fragment of the east wall remain. The crossing carried a great square tower 44 feet by 41 feet; its north and west arches remain. Towards the end of the fourteenth century the tower was raised, and, later still, a spire as high, it is said, as that of Old St. Paul's, certainly higher than that of Salisbury, was built upon it, probably of wood and lead, and this fell within the memory of men living when Leland passed by, though whether before or after the Dissolution is not clear.

The nave was of nine bays 122 feet in length, and, with its aisles, 69 feet wide. Each bay consisted, as we see, of three

stages, arcade, triforium and clerestory, the last, as we have it, a rebuilding of the fourteenth century, when the nave was



Malmesbury Abbey, South Porch

vaulted and flying buttresses were added to take the weight, which, however, continued to fall upon the Norman walls.

The clerestory wall is finished with an openwork trefoiled parapet as is the wall of the south aisle. In the second and third bays of this aisle, large windows with curiously ugly tracery were then inserted, apparently for the sake of light.

The church is still entered by the south porch. This projects from the seventh bay, has always been the main entrance of the church and is one of the grandest Norman works left in England. Externally the walls were thickened to 10 feet in the fourteenth century, for it was upon this porch it was first proposed to build the great western tower,[1] which eventually was erected over the west end of the nave; but the wonderful entrance arch, the interior of the porch and the inner doorway remain as the Normans built them in the twelfth century.

The deep and cavernous entrance arch, perhaps the noblest in England, consists of no fewer than eight members, each richly sculptured. The outermost, the third, the fifth, and the eighth are carved with foliage and leaf-work, and the seventh with lozenges; but the second, the fourth, and the sixth, which are larger than the rest, are divided into cross panels and sculptured in relief with figure subjects. Of these, the innermost contains the Bible story in eleven panels, from the Creation to the death of Abel; the next continues the story in fourteen panels to the time of David; the last deals in thirteen panels with the life of our Lord, beginning with the Annunciation and the Nativity, and ending with the Passion, the Crucifixion and the Descent of the Holy Ghost on the first Whit Sunday. In the jambs of this last order are eight panels, four on either side, in which the Virtues are represented trampling on the Vices. The subjects of the jambs in the other figured orders are not to be deciphered owing to their ruinous state.

We can only compare this splendid work with the later, though similar, work in the north porch of the chapel of St. Mary at Glastonbury. But Glastonbury has nothing to show comparable with the rest of the work here. For within this arch stands a great vaulted porch, the vault itself a rebuilding of 1905, but the side walls original. Both these are arcaded

[1] Mr. Brakspear points out that "a tower in this position does not now exist in any of our large churches, but it occurs at the priory churches of Edington (Wilts.) and Bruton (Somerset) and did exist at St. Radigund's near Dover, and at Walsingham."

with four arches carved with a double zigzag pattern and supported still in the angles on detached columns with scalloped capitals. On either side is a stone seat; and in the spandrils of the vault, east and west, are groups of six seated figures, with an angel in flight above. The twelve Apostles, six on either side. St. Peter with the keys at the northern or church end of the western group. St. Paul with a book, opposite to him at the northern end of the eastern group. Only three figures beside that of St. Paul have books and these Mr. Brakspear suggests, and rightly, I think, represent St. Matthew, St. James and St. John the only other Apostolic writers. The work is wonderful in its majesty, and only to be matched by the Byzantine works of Southern Italy and Sicily. In its amazing simplicity and marvellous decorative qualities it is unique in England.

The inner door is scarcely less noble. It too consists of a round arch of three members, most richly sculptured with foliage, as is the lintel of the rectangular doorway. Above in the tympanum is a majestic figure of our Lord in a mandorla, upheld by two flying angels.

From this magnificent porch one enters the last three bays of the south aisle, which have no counterpart in the nave or north aisle; beyond, that is, north of these bays, at one time rose the western tower, now destroyed, though when exactly it fell we do not know. Thence one passes into the body of the church, that nave of six bays with north and south aisles which is all that is left to us of the great interior. Each of these bays, as I have said, consists of three stages, the main arcade, the triforium and the clerestory.

The main arcade has short round pillars not less than 5 feet in diameter, with moulded bases and scalloped capitals. From these rise slightly pointed arches of three orders with a label above, billeted, having finials of dragons' heads, and at the apex a grotesque head. From the capitals too, rise the vaulting shafts. Above the arcade is a plain string course. The triforium is very noble. It consists in each bay of a single round arch containing four smaller arches, save indeed in the eastern bay where the smaller arches number but three. The greater arches of three members, of which the middle is chevroned, are supported by moulded jambs and detached columns with scalloped capitals. The smaller are supported on monolithic

columns with squarish capitals. All the arches are round. On the south side is a curious projecting chamber that Mr. Brakspear suggests used to hold the organs for the nave altar service.



Corporation Almshouse, Malmesbury.

The bays of the clerestory are divided by pilasters with columns in the angles. Through these pilasters runs a tunnelled passage way. This stage is of the fourteenth century, the tracery of the windows being light and beautiful.

The aisles are what we should expect; but the second and

third bays of the south aisle have, as I have said, a large window of the fourteenth century inserted, and very ugly they are. In the other bays the windows have been mullioned and spoilt at the same period.

Much the same fate has befallen the windows in the north aisle. In the fourth bay, however (perhaps here there was a chapel), a large fourteenth century window has been inserted. In the easternmost window there are some fragments of fourteenth century grisaille glass.

The only monument left in the church now stands under the first bay of the nave on the south. It is an altar tomb of the fifteenth century in which is an effigy over the head of which is a fine canopy. No sign or inscription is upon the tomb, and Mr. Brakspear tells us that in the Great Rebellion when all the glass of the church save that in the north aisle was destroyed, the head of this figure was broken off and a new one substituted. The monument passes for that of King Athelstan, but so far as I know without any sort of authority.

The whole interior effect of this noble fragment of Norman architecture, the six remaining bays of the nave of Malmesbury Abbey, is utterly ruined and spoilt by the pews and the unspeakable furniture and memorials which plaster and disfigure pillars and walls.

Little, too little, remains apart from the ruins of the Abbey in Malmesbury from the old time before us—before the revolution of the sixteenth century which made of England a land of ruins. There is the Market Cross, of which I have spoken, a work of the early sixteenth century. There is the Green Dragon Inn. But what has become of the White Lion, which was once the hospice of the Abbey? Nothing remains.

Something more than nothing is to be found of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem near St. John's Bridge, which is now the corporation almshouse. Here is a fine doorway, but walled up, dating from the thirteenth century. Of the Hospital of St. Anthony near South Bridge, founded in 1245, of the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalen at Burton, not a stone remains.

Thomas Hobbes, the philosopher and author of the "Leviathan" was born in Malmesbury in 1538, and it was through Westport, his birth-place, that I left Malmesbury one morning to go to Brokenborough, which I wanted to see because of Aubrey's very interesting description of it. He says that its position is

very like that of Malmesbury, and he is right, for it stands like the abbey town upon a high promontory, and "the river embraces it in the figure of a horse shoe." Here, Aubrey goes on to say, "was the seate of King Athelstane which the inhabitants still show." It is true one is still taken to the site of this palace which was given by King Edwyn in 952 to Malmesbury Abbey, and appears among the possessions of the great House in Domesday Book. The village can boast, too, of one of the finest medieval barns in the county. This has two great porches like, though not so large as, those at Cherhill. Aubrey saw this barn and asserts that another "much greater," probably "a grange of the abbey," was pulled down "since the warres." The "old farme house moated" of which he speaks has also gone, but the moat remains and the ponds, to the west of the church. The place is called Conigre, perhaps after St. Congre.[1]

The church itself, dedicated in honour of St. John Baptist, is very well worth a visit, though it has suffered more than most from the restorer. It consists of chancel, nave with north aisle and north porch. There once stood here a Transitional Norman building, and of this the nave arcade remains, four round arches on cylindrical pillars. The south wall and the aisle were rebuilt in the fifteenth century, the south wall being on new foundations, for the church was then enlarged, as the position of the west window proves; it is not in the middle of the present west wall of the nave. The chancel arch and chancel are of the thirteenth century in the Early English style. On the north of the arch is a fine hagioscope, and in the south wall a lovely lancet window. The east window, too, is fine and of the same period. The pulpit is restored Jacobean; and a fragment of fresco remains high upon the south wall of the nave, near two exquisite corbel heads which uphold the roof there. The porch is modern.

Quite upon the other side of Malmesbury lie two other places which are worth a visit if only for the fact that they belonged to the old Abbey and were also, the one a purchase of incorrigible Stumpe, the other the house of a branch of the Washington family, and thus in some rather vague way connected with the founder of the United States.

The village of Charlton, chiefly remarkable for its noble house, Charlton Towers, was at the Dissolution bought by Mr. Stumpe. His son, Sir James—mark there the inevitable

[1] See my *Highways and Byways in Somerset.*

climb—Sheriff of Wilts, married a daughter of Sir Edward Baynton of Bromham, and had a daughter, his heiress, who married Sir Henry Knyvett. It was Sir Henry who built Charlton House, probably by the hand of Webb after a design attributed to Inigo Jones. He too had as his heir a daughter, and she married the Earl of Suffolk: her second son and heir was created Earl of Berkshire, and so Charlton came to the Earls of Suffolk and Berkshire, and is their seat to this day. Dryden had married the daughter of this house, and in May, 1665, when the plague fell upon London, he retired here with his wife, and there his eldest son was born. It was during this retreat that he wrote the *Annus Mirabilis* and the *Essay on Dramatic Poesy*. He was not then a Catholic, and though the ruins of Malmesbury may well have turned the thoughts of an artist that way, and might well have inspired passages in *The Hind and the Panther*, England was littered with such ruins, and actually that greatest of controversial poems was written in Northamptonshire.

Charlton Church, where Dryden may then have prayed, is set at the entrance to the park of Charlton House or Tower. It consists of nave with tower, north aisle and south porch, and chancel with north aisle. It has been very much restored, but two lovely things remain to it: the two beautiful lancets of the nave and the delicious Early English double lancet window of the chancel aisle, a most exquisite work. The fine tomb of Sir Henry Knyvett and his wife is now hidden behind the organ; it used to stand between the chancel and the aisle.

Not far from Charlton is Garsdon, where, indeed, there is very little to see, for too little remains of the old manor house of the Washingtons, and only the tower of the church is old. It is said that the Manor, which belonged to Malmesbury Abbey, was given by Henry VIII., who stole it, to a servant of his, a lousy fellow named Moody, who pulled him one day out of the mud, into which he had fallen on his face, being unable to rise on account of his unwieldy bulk. Moody, as one might expect, sold to Sir Laurence Washington, and it is for his sake, though, indeed, he has nothing to do with the incorruptible George, who came of the Northamptonshire branch of the family, that so many Americans visit Garsdon. In the church is a tablet to Sir Laurence, who would be horrified to find it decorated with the Stars and Stripes; and five other Washingtons are

buried here. Bishop Potter of New York has restored this monument as we see, and also had replicas made of the Communion plate for his cathedral.

One fine morning, towards the end of summer, when I had had my fill of Malmesbury and its villages, I went on southward towards Chippenham, and on my way spent an hour or two in three small places, each just off the high road in the delicious country to the west of it where it begins with infinite gentleness to rise towards the Cotswolds.

The first of these little villages was Hullavington, where, alas! the church has been rebuilt, reverently and wisely I make no doubt, but still rebuilt. At the vicarage I was shown a fine piece of embroidery of the late fifteenth century. This consists of a square of brown silk about 3 feet 6 inches each way, with embroidered ornaments appliquéd upon it. In the midst is a representation of our Lord Crucified with the Dove of the Holy Spirit above and on either hand an angel catching in a chalice the blood from His wounded hands. Below is St. Mary Magdalen under a canopy, at the corners are four saints, St. Thomas, St. James, St. Philip and another. Cherubs hold a scroll upon which we read *Da Gloriam Deo*, and all about are flowers. This piece is probably part of a chasuble that has been remade up perhaps in Laudian times.

Not far away is Bradford Manor House, now a farm, of which Aubrey speaks. It is not without interest for two reasons; the fifteenth century hall, or part of it, remains, and other parts of the house are still of the seventeenth century; but best of all is it to know that this house was once the home of William Collingbourne, who wrote that famous distich upon Richard III., and his sycophants which every schoolboy knows, and which cost him his head.

> "The Cat, the Rat and Lovel the Dog
> Rule all England under the Hog."

I went on to Stanton St. Quentin, where the church of St. Giles is interesting. It is a Transitional Norman building with a later chancel, and still retains in arch and font and doorway substantial reminders of that far away time. Without, over the east window of the chancel, is a relief of the Crucifixion, and within there is a curious sacristy. The rectory is worth a visit if only for the sake of the coats upon the back of it;

the shields of Wells with those of Bishop Beckington and two others.

The place does not, as the dedication of the church tells us, get its name from St. Quentin, neither from the saint, nor from St. Quentin in France, but from the family of that name, whose old manor house has also been utterly destroyed. In its old park, now one of the Earl of Radnor's coverts, in 1764, a sailor named Hartford was murdered by his mate, who was hanged for it on the old common, now enclosed, hard by.

But far more interesting than either Hullavington or Stanton St. Quentin is Kington St. Michael.

To begin with, the two great Wiltshire antiquaries, John Aubrey and John Britton, were born in the parish, the first in 1626, at Lower Easton Place, in a house now destroyed, the latter in 1771, the son of a small farmer in Kington itself.

The place was first known as Kington, and as the name suggests, was Crown property. In 934, King Athelstan gave a great part of it to Atheline, and in 941 he presented eight hides to the Abbey of Glastonbury, the monks receiving a much larger portion from Ethelred the Unready, "to be by them held so long as the Catholic Faith shall endure in England." With their faith they have disappeared; but in their day, Kington was called Kington Monachorum, or Moyne. This was changed again in the twelfth century when the Priory was founded—a Benedictine nunnery; and Kington Monachorum became Kington Minchin.

It will be remembered that in the first years of the thirteenth century an attempt was made to confound the Abbey of Glaston with the Bishopric of Wells, an incredible outrage that has only been accomplished after the death of both. This was frustrated, but, most unjustly, the Abbey was compelled to deliver certain of its lands to the Bishop; among these was Kington. Such a thing could not endure in those days, and before the middle of the century Glaston had got back its own. It was then that Michael of Amesbury, the Wiltshire Abbot of Glaston (1235–53), restored the church and rededicated it in honour of his patron saint, St. Michael. Thus Kington became Kington St. Michael.

In 1536, at the Dissolution of Glaston, a very typical thing befell here in Kington, typical, I mean, of what was happening all over England. The bailiff of the Abbot's manor of Kington,

one Nicholas Snell, which, by the way, is an old Wiltshire word signifying *sharp*, foreseeing the fall of the Religious Houses, followed the example of the unjust steward in the Gospel, and made to himself friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. He began by becoming a thief. He forgot to settle with the Abbey, Canon Jackson relates, for the latest arrears of rent, and Abbot Whiting, then about to suffer martyrdom, did not worry him for them. With these moneys, Sharp Snell, the thief, bought the manor of Kington of the king. It cost him £803 17*s.* 2¾*d.*

This unjust steward was now squire, and the first thing he did (mark it well!) was to deprive the people of Kington of certain rights and usages of theirs. The Abbot's park, in which were large carp ponds, lay west of the church, and the feeding was common to the Abbey tenants, and they also had certain parcels of land in the Westfield then unenclosed. The new squire wished to enlarge his prospect, perhaps! *What he did was to shut the people out of the park and take away their Westfield allotments.* "So," says Aubrey, "heretofore they had been able to keep the whole plough but since, having only work enough for half a plough they lived poorly and needily." After this the new squire having gone from bad to worse, from stealing from the Abbot to stealing from the poor, was returned to Parliament, married very well, was knighted, and rebuilt the Abbots Court House as his own, which still in some sort remains.

The little church was restored in 1857, but still retains its interest. It consists of chancel, nave, with north and south aisles, south porch and western tower. The chancel arch is of much beauty and is all that remains of the Norman church which once stood here. The arcades of the nave are of the thirteenth century, but the north aisle is a work of 1755. The chancel has a charming Early English window, enriched with fine carving, but the east window is Perpendicular. In Aubrey's time it was filled with old glass, in which one saw three figures, one of which was Christine Nye, Prioress of Kington. I shall speak of the Priory in a moment. On the south side was another figure in the glass representing another prioress, Lady Cicely Bodenham. Nothing of these remains. The original porch, too, has gone, but the inner doorway is Norman. The tower was Norman too, but now dates from 1725, when it was totally rebuilt.

The priory of St. Mary Kington lay three-quarters of a mile away towards Leigh Delamere; some remains of it, meagre enough, may still be seen at the Priory Farm.

This priory was a house of Benedictine nuns, eight or nine of whom filled the place. It is generally believed to have been founded in the twelfth century, but this is uncertain, though Aubrey attributes it to the Empress Matilda, who founded the Abbey of Stanley not far away. On the other hand, Canon Jackson tells us that the charters of the priory point to one, Robert, son of Walter, of Brimtone. The priory lay in a pleasant domain which surrounded the house. The fishponds were to the south, and to the east was a large ground called the Nymph-Hay, and it is there we have one of the most charming pictures of the Middle Age, for, by some good fortune, Aubrey tells us there the nuns and their young scholars used to walk.

"The young maids were brought up (not as at Hackney, Sarum Schools, etc., to learn pride and wantonness), but at nunneries where they had examples of piety and humility, modesty and obedience to imitate and practise. Here they learned needlework, the art of confectionery, surgery (anciently no apothecaries or surgeons; the gentlewomen did cure their poor neighbours; their hands are now too fine); physic, writing, drawing, etc., Old Jacques, who lived where Charles Hadnam did, could see from his house, the nuns of the priory of St. Mary's Kington, come forth into the Nymph-Hay with their rocks and wheels to spin, and with their sewing work. He would say that he had told three-score and ten, but of nuns there were not so many,[1] but in all with Lay Sister: as widows, old maids and young girls, there might be such a number. This was a fine way of breeding up young women, who are led more by example than precept; and a good retirement for widows and grave single-women to a civil, virtuous and holy life. In the old hedges, belonging to the Priory, were a good number of Barberry trees, which 'tis likely the nuns used for confections. Their last priest was Parson Whaddon, whose chamber is that on the right hand of the porch with the old fashioned chimney."

This charming and quiet retreat was surrendered and dissolved by the king in 1534. The last prioress was Madam Mary Deanes; "She dyed in Bristowe 1593 a good olde maide

[1] There were four professed nuns at Kington Priory at the Dissolution.

verie vertuose and godlye: and is buried in the church of the Gauntes on the Grene." The whole estate was granted in 1538 to Sir Richard Long, brother of Sir Henry Long of Draycote, *who had been its chief Seneschal.* The house and lands were afterwards sold (1556) to John Taylor of Castle Combe. His daughter Eleanor married Thomas Lyle of Easton Piers, and was great-grandmother to John Aubrey. And so, thinking how this modicum of good came out of all this evil, I went on my way into Chippenham.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE VALLEY OF THE WESTERN AVON. CHIPPENHAM. BRADENSTOKE PRIORY AND THEIR VILLAGES

THERE is not much to-day in the way of visible antiquity to interest the traveller in the ancient market town of Chippenham. At the entrance to the town a long, irregular bridge, old, indeed, but rebuilt in 1796, crosses the Avon; there the High Street begins, presently winding up the hill by the market square, where on an island of ground in the midst surrounded by more modern houses, the old Town Hall may still in some sort be seen, the parish church of St. Andrew, rebuilt in 1878, standing not far away.

But in spite of its forlorn appearance, Chippenham is old and of noble lineage, and its industries, its mills and tanneries, at least bear witness to an immemorial energy.

No Norman Way passed within five miles of the place, and the Fosse Way passes at least six miles to the west, over the hills between Bath and Cirencester. Chippenham in fact knew not the Romans, it was a town of the Saxons, of the end of the Dark Ages, and its name supplies its history, for it is derived from the Saxon Ceapan, to buy. The place was a market just within, though not belonging to, the large royal forest, which came in the thirteenth century to be known as the forest of Chippenham and Melksham, while the forest of Braden lay away to the north-east.

These forests really explain the early importance of the town, for it was on account of the hunting that Chippenham was sometimes a residence of the kings of Wessex, of which we are still reminded, by the name of a house known as the Palace beside the Angel Inn. The place was, indeed, a royal manor, and here the father of King Alfred gave his daughter Ethelswitha

in marriage to Buthred King of Mercia. Here, too, Alfred often lived, and hence he was driven by the Danes into the marshes of Athelney. In 878 the Danes made Chippenham their headquarters, and it was from this town they issued out to meet, and to be broken by, Alfred and the West Saxons at Ethandune.

We know little more of Chippenham save that Alfred bequeathed it to his daughter Elfrida, till we find it named in Domesday Book as one of the manors held by St. Edward, in his own hand. The town, which at that time boasted twelve mills, then quite disappears from history, only to appear again as a halting place in the Royalist march from Lansdowne to Oxford in the Great Rebellion. This open town played no great part in that miserable business, though it was the scene of a certain amount of fighting of a local sort, and though, in 1648, Cromwell was there himself at the White Hart, his soldiers lodged in the church. Indeed, from the Conquest to the advent of the Great Western Railway, Chippenham, though on the great western road, must have been one of the sleepiest places in England. The railway awakened it, and for a time its cloth and iron foundries were famous through England, nor has this strange energy by any means passed altogether from it to-day: its population is increasing, and every year it loses something of its old dignity in its desire for improvement.

The parish church, almost the only antiquity left to it, besides its insulated old Town Hall, consists of nave with aisles and south chapel, chancel with north and south chapels and western tower of three stages. As we see it, it is a rebuilding of a fifteenth century church in which Alfred may have knelt. No one entering St. Andrew's to-day would guess, however, that any great antiquity lay behind it, almost the only things left to it out of yesterday being the chapel of St. Catherine, once a two-storeyed building, now used as a Baptistery, and the south chancel and Lady Chapel, or, as it came to be called, the Hungerford Chapel, built in 1442 by Walter Lord Hungerford, the builder of the Hungerford Chapel at St. Sampson's, Cricklade. This, however, has also been so freely modernised that even the gravestones have been moved. In recent years, however, the church has been well cared for, and we may be sure that what little is left to it will be reverently spared. The living

was until the Dissolution in the possession of the Cluniacs of Farleigh, which itself was a cell of Lewes. At the Dissolution, however, the king gave all to the college Wolsey had founded at Oxford, Christ Church, the Dean and Chapter of which are still in possession.

But if Chippenham itself is not as full of interest as one might hope, it is to be loved, if only because it is the key to some of the loveliest and most interesting villages in the country.

Among these I suppose I ought not to reckon Hardenhuish (Harnish), and yet I do not know. It is fair enough in its littleness beside its great park, and it boasts of a rare thing, a church built in 1770 by a famous architect, Wood, of Bath, and there, for those whom it may interest, lies the Jewish Economist, David Ricardo, who married and turned Christian, so they say, and made a large fortune before the Battle of Waterloo.

Then to the north of Chippenham is the beautiful little village of Langley Burrell, to reach which one passes along "Maud Heath's Causeway," a paved footway built in the fifteenth century by a certain Maud Heath, supposed to be a market woman of Langley Burrell, who, dying in 1474, left property of the value of £8 a year to maintain a footway from Wick Hill to Chippenham Clett. At the Chippenham end of this "causeway" is a stone with the following inscription:

"Hither extendeth Maud Heath's gift
For where I stand is Chippenham Clift."

At Kellaways, beyond Langley Burrell, is also a stone pillar with a sundial, on which we read: "To the memory of the worthy Maud Heath of Langley Burrell, widow, who in the year of grace 1474, for the good of travellers, did in charity bestow in lands and houses about eight pounds a year for ever, to be laid out on the highways and Causey leading from Wick Hill to Chippenham Clift. This pillar was set up by the trustees in 1698. Injure me not." There are also verses by poor old parson Bowles.

At the top of Wick Hill, the end of the Causeway, is another stone upon which we read:

"From this Wick Hill begins the praise
Of Maud Heath's gifts to these highways."

And under: "The translation into English verse of the earlier Latin inscription on this stone was made by the Rev. W. L. Bowles in 1827." The excellent man would have been better employed in conserving the Latin.

On a height close by, whence there is a great view all round the country, stands a column with a statue of Maud Heath with her basket and staff. Beneath we read: "Erected at the joint expense of Henry Marquis of Lansdowne, Lord of the Manor, and Wm. L. Bowles, vicar of the parish of Bremhill, trustees, 1838."

> "Thou who didst pause on this aerial height
> Where Maud Heath's Pathway winds in shade or light
> Christian wayfarer in a world of strife
> Be still and ponder on the Path of Life.
>
> W. L. B."

Canon Jackson, to whom we are indebted, as we are still to the Rev. E. H. Goddard, Mr. Ponting, Mr. Brakspear, and Mr. Doran Webb, to name no others, for nearly all we know of the medieval archæology of Wiltshire, could not bring himself to believe that such a gift as this came from a market woman. He looked for a woman of rank and wealth, and was convinced he had found her in the "cracked glass" of a window in the south aisle of Bremhill church, of which Aubrey has told us, for it has long since been destroyed. This window represented a man and a woman kneeling, and bore the inscription: "ORATE P. AIA JOHIS HETH." The woman, Canon Jackson thought, must have been Maud, the benefactor of us poor travellers.

Langley Burrell, where Maud Heath, market woman or not, was born, is an interesting place with an Early English and Perpendicular church, having a Decorated south tower all carefully put in order by Mr. Brakspear in 1898. The name of the place is curious. It is to be noted that the Earl of Salisbury, to whom Norman William granted the manor, leased it to one Burel, and I take it that is how Langley got its second name. In 1304, however, it was held by the Delameres, who in 1343 sold it to Lord Berkeley, whose daughter married Sir Reginald de Cobham. In 1391 the King, however, presented to the rectory because Reginald de Cobham was still a minor. This unhappy man was in 1413 burnt as a heretic, and is said "to walk still on Strenbrook Hill carrying his head under his arm," all naked as they burnt him.

From Langley Burrell I went on to Kington Langley and Draycot Cerne. At Kington Langley little remains save a seventeenth century farm house. The old chapel of St. Peter, of which Aubrey speaks, and which belonged to Glastonbury Abbey from whom the Fitzurses held the manor, was desecrated as early as 1670. The village Revel here used in old times to be kept on the Sunday within the octave of the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul (29 June), and according to Aubrey "was one of the eminentest Feasts in these parts." Old John Westfield of Langley told him that he had been Peterman at St. Peter's church in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign. The "Peterman," according to Canon Jackson, was the person chosen to collect money for charitable purposes at the Dedication festival.

Draycot Cerne is lovely because of its noble park, and though its great house is wholly modernised and differs totally from the picture of it drawn by Aubrey, it contains much of the old house within a modern mask. The place got its second name from the family who held it in the thirteenth century. One of these was Sir Edward de Cerne (d. 1393) whose brass with that of his second wife has lately been restored to its place in the little church of St. James within the garden beside the great house. Sir Edward's great granddaughter married John Hervng, to whom she brought the property, and he sold it to Robert King of Wraxall, and the two properties were united in 1490, but in 1615 were divided again by the will—a most unjust one, concerning the making of which a queer story is told of the interposition of a ghostly hand—of Sir Walter Long. This will was disputed, but the affair was eventually settled by John Long taking Wraxall and his half brother keeping Draycot. With his descendants it remained till 1805, when on the death of the male heir it passed by marriage to the Earls of Mornington, and in 1863 to the Cowleys. All this after all scarcely concerns us. It is in the church we find our interest in Draycot. This consists of chancel, nave, western tower and south porch; and within is a huge "transept pew" on the north of the nave which contains not only a "private font" of the fourteenth century, but a fireplace and several monuments. The church we see was originally Early English, and such the nave remains for the most part, for it still keeps two Early English lancets. The chancel is of the same time and so is the south door, but the

porch and tower are Perpendicular. The chancel, which is lower than the nave, is still lovely with its Early English lancets, double piscina and priest's door. Upon the walls are many old memorials, helmets and lances of the Cernes and the Longs. To the north in an arched and canopied recess is the thirteenth century tomb upon which lies the effigy of Sir Philip de Cerne, the supposed founder of the church, all in mail and cross-legged. On the floor is the noble brass to Sir Edward de Cerne and his wife Ellen (d. 1393). Then within the altar rails is the fine altar tomb ablaze with heraldry of Sir Thomas Long. His son Henry, who distinguished himself at the battle of Therouenne and was knighted by Henry VIII., also lies here, but his plain tomb " with a faire black marble " has disappeared. Altogether the church is beautiful with the past, a true epitome of England.

Close to Draycot stands Sutton Benger. Here the church of All Saints is well worth a visit since it is largely a Decorated building of the fourteenth century. It consists of nave, with south aisles, and south porch, chancel and western tower, with small spire of much beauty. The most beautiful part of the church within is the south aisle, which has very lovely east and west windows, two brackets finely carved and exquisite carvings of the respond of the nave arcade. Here by the door is a Transitional Norman font. There are few things in all Wiltshire lovelier than this aisle. The east window should especially be noted. At the bottom of the centre light there is a panel traceried without, but within covered by a traceried niche, the head of which was found some years ago in the churchyard.

The porch is Perpendicular. Just by the door within is preserved in a frame a fine piece of embroidery. It measures 8 feet 1½ inches by 2 feet 4 inches, and consists of two strips sewn together, each of them made up each of three panels in which is a saint standing under a canopy, now mutilated. The whole is a spoiled vestment or part of a vestment and is undoubtedly, according to Sir W. H. St. John Hope, an English work of the fifteenth century.

Beyond Sutton Benger on the high road after it has turned eastward and crosses the Avon stands the village of Christian Malford, where now enclosed in an orchard stands a cross visible from the road. It is, I think, this cross which explains the curious name of this place, for Christian Malford is probably Christesmoelford, the ford by Christ's Cross. The church of

All Saints is worth a visit, for here again is a beautiful south aisle of the fourteenth century; it contains the old Norman font, and there is some old glass in the east window. The magnificent fifteenth century screen is mostly plaster, though it looks like oak.

Now when I left Christian Malford, I began to look about me for the third of those religious houses which glorified this beauteous valley of the Avon; the first was Malmesbury



Bradenstoke Priory, or Canons' Abbey.

Abbey, the second was Kington Priory, the little nunnery of Kington St. Michael, the third was Bradenstoke, and it was for Bradenstoke I now began to scan the hills. That it stood on a hill I knew, but I confess I was not prepared for that great bastion I found.

Soon after leaving Christian Malford, looking now on my map, now across the landscape to the south, I found a byway which soon crossed the railway and became a mere track through the meadows, up and up under hedge and secular elm, until at last it led me breathless to the top of the steep north escarpment.

where I found a great farm-house, and that, as I soon saw, was all that was left of the priory of Bradenstoke, popularly, but wrongly, called Clack Abbey. No finer situation was ever chosen for a priory than this island of hills on the confines of the forest of Braden, where you may see for many miles all over North Wiltshire. Happy were they who dwelt in quietness in such a place. They were Augustinian Canons, and their house was founded in 1142 by Walter D'Evreux, the father of Patrick Earl of Sarum, and great-grandfather of Ela, the foundress of Lacock and Hinton, the great Longespée's wife, and Countess of Salisbury in her own right. Here Walter, the founder, assumed the habit. For near six hundred years these Black Canons lived here in holiness, blessing all Wiltshire and this noble valley of the Avon, which they with their brethren and sisters, at Malmesbury, Kington Stanley, Lacock, Monkton Farleigh, Bath, Keynesham and Bristol, made a holy valley, *vallis in qua beneplacitum est Deo habitare in ea*. Not one of these houses, two of them as old and as great as any in England, did Henry Tudor leave standing. This beautiful priory of St. Mary, founded in 1142, did not escape. Its buildings and lands were granted to Richard Pexhill, and all was destroyed, save what we see. The farm house occupies the site of the king's lodging, in which Henry III. in 1235 signed the charter he gave in that year to St. Peter's, Gloucester. The church stood to the south; nothing at all remains of it, and of the convent, only the guest-house which stood to the north of it, a building of the fourteenth century. Of this the most perfect part is the undercroft, now a sort of storehouse or cellarage. It is vaulted in stone, the vaults borne by short pillars. Above is the great hall, now divided up into rooms and floors, but still, externally at least, and especially on the west, preserving much of its old beauty. The roof within may still be seen from the garrets, and it is worth inspection. At the north end of this building is a turret, approached by a corner stairway. It is sad to remember that the last prior, William Snow, was a traitor and a heretic, and in consequence was at the Dissolution given £60 a year and appointed first Dean of the new Protestant Cathedral of Bristol.

I lingered many days at Bradenstoke (and, had I but lived in the fifteenth century, I might have stayed at the priory and eaten in that great guest hall), for I was exceedingly taken

with the place, its situation there up over all Wiltshire, the Marlborough Downs to the east, the valley of the Avon, and over it Malmesbury to the north, the hills of Bowood to the south and the shadowy Cotswolds to the west. One day I went down to Cavenham House, under the southern escarpment of the hill, a mansion which the hungry Hungerfords built out of the ruins of Bradenstoke Priory. On another day I went off to see four places in the valley to the north, Brinkworth, the two Somertons and Dauntsey; but always I returned to Bradenstoke, and always I was glad to get back. It is curious how these old religious houses pull at our heartstrings. You find them all over England, they litter every county, and even in their ruin and our neglect, they fill England with a shadow of beauty, the ghost of what we have lost.

Brinkworth stands up over the Brinkworth Brook, a tributary of the Avon, on the north bank of it. Its chief interest lies in its church of St. Michael and in its fine old Tudor rectory, in which is incorporated work of the fourteenth century. Here lived and officiated Dr. Tobias Crispe (1600–43), a parson with strong Arminian leanings, but a good fellow and pious man, who was turned out of this living on account of his Puritan sympathies, and died in London.

The church is a large Perpendicular building, consisting of nave, north aisles and south porch, chancel and western tower. It still retains certain vestiges of colour, and in the chancel there are two hagioscopes in the south and north walls. Perhaps, however, its best possession is the fine screen beneath the Jacobean gallery and the pews and pulpit with sounding-board, on the back of which is cut: "Woe be unto me if I preach not the Gospel. Anno Domini, 1630." The supports are more ancient. Beside the pulpit is a chained copy of Foxe's "Book of Martyrs," presented to the church by Samuel Crispe, brother of Dr. Tobias, the unfortunate rector. The communion table is of the same date.

It is, perhaps, three miles from Brinkworth to Little Somerford, and all the way lies westward beside the Brinkworth Brook. Little Somerford, Somerford Mauditt, Somerford Moline, for it has borne all these names of the various families which have held the manor, is a fair, tiny village which still in some sort keeps its old manor house, Mauditt Park, though it is now a farm. Better, it keeps almost entire its old thirteenth century

church of St. John Baptist. This is a most simple building with a western tower, but without aisles or any division between nave and chancel save a remarkable fourteenth century screen, which almost certainly came from Malmesbury Abbey. Above is a tympanum, occupied, as we might expect, by the cross of Queen Elizabeth, in place of the Crucifixion or the Last Judgment. It is a wonder that the cross seen by Aubrey still remains over the Perpendicular south porch. The double-decker pulpit and desk are Jacobean (1626).

It is but a mile due south across the Avon to Great Somerford, a prettier village than its sister, I think. It too has borne many names, Broad Somerford, Somerford Maltravers, Somerford Ewyas, and Somerford Bolles. But in the seventeenth century it came to the Jasons, and their manor house still stands to the west of the church. It is called the Mount, for behind it is a great mound, wooded now, where of old there was certainly a castle or stockade which held the ford of the Avon here.

The church of SS. Peter and Paul stands up over the stream, the Perpendicular successor of many another, I suppose. It consists of nave with north aisle, south porch, chancel and western tower, and there are two turrets, one leading to the belfry, and the other, I suppose, to the destroyed rood loft. Within as without all is of the fifteenth century, the two best things being the carved capitals of the arcade and the very complete piscina with shelf under a fine carved arch on the south side of the chancel. A twisted passage, arched too, leads from the chancel to the now destroyed altar of the north aisle. I think this north aisle altar must have been that of the Blessed Sacrament, and it was for that reason the passage was made, so that the priest might bear the Body of our Lord from one altar to the other without passing through the body of the church.

A mile from Great Somerford eastward again is Dauntsey, with its fine manor house and park, old half-timber school, now an almshouse and church, close by. The house is hard to see, but a view of the older part of it may be had from the church. Here the Dauntseys lived.

The manor belonged to the Abbey of Malmesbury, but in the fourteenth century Sir John Dauntsey held it, and in the fifteenth Joan Dauntsey took it to Sir John Stradling, whose sister Anne brought it to the Danvers. Aubrey tells a fine tale

about this. He asserts that Sir Edward and all his family were murdered on Saturday night by the priest who was in consequence hanged, the property passing then to Anne Dauntsey, who was married by John Danvers before she knew of her inheritance. Canon Jackson gives an even more gruesome version of the tale, in which the priest was assisted by the parish clerk. According to this tale the priest was starved to death in a cage, and the clerk was burned alive. There may or may not be truth in these stories: all we know is that Sir Edward Stradling's sister Anne inherited Dauntsey and brought it into the Danvers family. Their descendant Henry Danvers was created Baron by James I. and Earl of Danby by the White King, who gave him the Garter. It was he who founded the school. Now mark what befell. He was succeeded by his brother, who not only rebelled against his king but was one of his judges, and signed his death warrant. He married the mother of George Herbert, and it was at Dauntsey Herbert met and married Jane Danvers, daughter of Charles Danvers of Baynton, a cousin of his step-father. Of course, the Restoration found the traitor, who is said to have repented before his death, deprived of his property. Dauntsey was presently granted to James Duke of York, who settled it upon Mary of Modena. Again it reverted to the Crown and was granted to a very famous man, Charles Mordaunt Earl of Peterborough, who commanded in Spain in the war of the Spanish Succession. He was, according to Macaulay, "if not the greatest, assuredly the most extraordinary character of his age. . . . Scarcely any General ever did so much with means so small." With his family Dauntsey remained till 1814, when it came to the Miles, and so to Meux, the brewer.

Much of this long and characteristic story of the Manor may be read in the church. This is dedicated to St. James and is a fine building, consisting of nave with aisles and porches, chancel with north chapel, now a vestry and western tower. The two doorways in some sort bear witness to the existence here of a Norman church, but the building we see is for the most part of the fourteenth century. The tower, however, dates from 1630, when the whole church was restored. Here again we have a fine fourteenth century screen dividing nave from chancel, but this too was restored in the seventeenth century. Above it is a fine "Doom" picture wherein we see our Lord enthroned

on the rainbow with angels blowing trumpets, and on one side the Blessed, on the other the Damned ; a rare and precious relic of that old England we shall never see again. In the chancel windows is some glass of this period. The monuments are interesting. On either side the chancel are the altar tombs of Sir John Danvers and his wife, Anne Stradling. Joan Dauntsey who brought the manor to the Stradlings lies beneath the altar. Before the altar lie the last Earl of Peterborough (d. 1814) and another Mordaunt (d. 1719). Within the iron gates of the Danby Chapel is the fine altar tomb of Henry, first Earl Danby, with an epitaph said to be by George Herbert, but quite unworthy of him.

From Dauntsey I went back to Bradenstoke by way of Tockenham, about the year 1600 a manor of the Danvers when the manor house was built, the north front of which we still see. Here is a remarkable painting of an ancestor, temp. Richard II., of the present owner, which is said to have been preserved in the nunnery of Bungay in Suffolk until the Dissolution. Of the church, alas ! I saw nothing, for it was closed.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE VALLEY OF THE WESTERN AVON: CALNE, STANLEY ABBEY AND BROMHAM

Upon the following morning I set out for Calne by the high road southward through Hilmerton. The little church of St. Laurence here is charming though it has been much restored. It consists of chancel with sacristy on the north and modern organ chamber on the south, nave with north aisle, the wall of which is new, new south porch and rebuilt western tower.

Of the old work the most ancient is the nave arcade of four bays on round columns—this is work of the late twelfth century. The rest of the church where it is not modern is Perpendicular. The sacristy, chancel and chancel arch are of the early fifteenth century, the fine stone screen of four bays on either side a central opening across it is a little later. In the north jamb of the chancel arch is a squint, and to the north of it a passage from the chancel into the north aisle, similar to that at Great Somerford. As I said in speaking of that, such passages seem to me to have been made for bearing the Blessed Sacrament to and fro from Its own altar to the high altar without passing through the body of the church. We do not generally find such passages before the fifteenth century. In the north wall of the aisle is a recessed tomb under a pinnacled arch—whose we do not know.

So I went on unto the fine town of Calne,

> Then Bradon gently brings forth Avon from her source
> [illegible]
> Receives the gentle Calne. . . .

In these lines we may find probably the origin, and certainly the source of the name, of this most pleasant town. Like Frome, for instance, it takes its name from its river which bears a Celtic title, Calne, Colann, a current of waters.

Of the origin of the place we know nothing; it may have been peopled in prehistoric times, and is certainly surrounded by prehistoric landmarks, Oldbury Castle, for instance, to the east and Wans House to the south, as it is by Roman habitations, Verlucio by Wans House, the villas at Bowood and Studeley Hill, while through Verlucio ran the Roman road to Speen, as did the Wansdyke upon it. But of Roman Calne if it existed we know nothing. It is not till Saxon times that we hear of Calne, when it appears as a Villa Regia, crown property, that is, occupied by a representative of the king, whose actual dwelling may well have stood upon the site of the Castle House.

Perhaps it was in that house that the most famous episode in the history of the town took place in 978. The story itself is told very briefly in the Saxon Chronicle under that year: "In this year all the chief witan of the English nation fell at Calne from an upper chamber except the holy Archbishop Dunstan who alone supported himself upon a beam. Some were grievously wounded, and some did not escape with life." What befell exactly seems to have been this. When King Edgar died in 975 and was buried at Glaston there began a movement against the monks; it was a dispute between the Regulars and the Seculars, and was taken up by the rival houses of Mercia and East Anglia. In Mercia all the monks were turned out of the churches, and the married clerks established in their place. It is possible that we see here a strong provincial movement against central authority and against Rome, whose soldiers the monks especially were. The cause of the monks was championed by East Anglia and the danger of civil war was increased by the vacancy of the throne. The right of Edgar's son Edward was upheld by Mercia, that of Ethelred the Unready by the west. Dunstan, the great archbishop, with the Archbishop of York, in spite of Mercia's backing of the seculars, supported Edward, and carried his election and crowned him at Winchester. The seculars' party at once demanded in the witan that Dunstan should expel the monks and restore the clerks, but while he hesitated to reply a Crucifix hanging in the hall of the witan spoke, saying, "Let it not be so; Let it not be so." For a time the monastic party therefore carried the day, but the matter was still hotly debated, and in 978 when the witan met at Calne the subject was being violently discussed and seemed like to go against the monastic party when the floor of the hall gave way,

and all the nobles fell down into the undercroft, fifty were killed and above a hundred wounded, Dunstan alone escaping, for his throne rested on a beam. Of course Protestant historians, including Milman, have accused Dunstan of arranging this disaster. But it seems to be pretty well conceded that, in the words of the Dictionary of National Biography, "there is not the slightest ground for asserting either that the voice heard at Winchester or that the fall of the floor at Calne was a trick devised by the archbishop to defeat the opponents of the monks. Although his sympathy was, of course, with the monastic party, he appears throughout this period rather as a moderator than as a partisan."

Such is the most famous episode in the history of Calne.

No famous man seems to claim Calne as a birthplace, but Abercromby, the Speaker, Macaulay and Robert Lowe represented it in Parliament and from 1770 Dr. Priestley lived there for ten years. We find Coleridge there a guest of John Morgan in 1815. The "unexampled assiduity and kindness" of Morgan has not been duly appreciated by the poet's biographers. Coleridge was then especially at the mercy of drugs and cannot have been anything but a very trying guest and a heavy responsibility. There he wrote his *Zapolya: A Christmas Tale in two parts*, "an humble imitation of the *Winter's Tale*." It was offered to Drury Lane and rejected in March, 1816.

To-day Calne is a cheerful Wiltshire town devoted for the most part to the curing of the famous Wiltshire bacon of Messrs. Harris. Its only monument is the parish church of the Blessed Virgin, a fine large building of very various dates, whose chief disaster seems to have been the fall of the central tower in 1628. Here in Norman times stood a cruciform church of much the same size as that we see. Of this church we still possess the south doorway. The earlier parts of the nave arcades and the western parts of the chancel and chapels are later, of the Transitional time. Then late in the fourteenth century the chancel was rebuilt, the north and south chapels remodelled at least. Early in the fifteenth century a chapel was added to the north side of the north aisle, this was perhaps the chantry of our Lady founded by the St. Lo family, and a little later the north aisle and north porch were rebuilt, as were the south aisle and south porch (but these have been rebuilt since) and a clerestory was added to the nave with roof as we see.

Then the tower fell in 1628, and it was probably at that time the chancel was re-roofed. The present tower was built by Inigo Jones in 1645.

In the churchyard lies Inverto Boswell, "King of the Gypsies."

For all its quiet and homely air, its very English pleasantness and well being, the chief attraction of Calne is that it is the key to many delicious villages more precious than itself.

First there is Cherhill. This lies upon the Marlborough Downs to the west of Calne some three miles away, under the White Horse cut in the chalk under Oldbury Castle in 1870 by a Dr. Alsop of Calne. Above it stands the Lansdowne Column erected to commemorate the birth of King Edward VII.

Oldbury Castle on the hilltop there is a very strong camp in a most commanding position. It has an area of 25 acres, and is surrounded by a ditch 1,276 yards in circumference. Two dwelling pits within the area have been opened. The entrance is to the south-east.

Cherhill itself has more than one thing of interest to show. The church is worth seeing though it was restored in 1864. It is for the most part a Perpendicular building early and late, and still possesses its Angelus bell inscribed: "SANCTA MARIA ORA PRO NOBIS." More interesting, I think, is the grand old barn near 100 feet long dating from the fifteenth century, built like a church almost with aisles and even transepts. There too are the remains of a manor house of the same period, and surely some of the old cottages must be older than that: they look as though they had grown here with the trees and the flowers.

To the north of Cherhill lie Compton Bassett Park, and the house built in 1674, by Sir John Weld, under the woods on the hillside, and beyond it the village under the downs, a most dear and delicious place. The church, which consists of clerestoried nave with north and south aisles and western tower, modern chancel, vestry and north porch, is dedicated in honour of Winchester's St. Swithin. The arcades of the nave of three bays are, that on the north of the twelfth and that on the south of the early thirteenth century. On both sides the arches are pointed, but the round columns on the north have square capitals, those on the south moulded. Nothing remains here of the fourteenth century; but the clerestory of the nave, with its barrel vaulted roof borne by shafts

supported on finely carved corbels, is of the fifteenth century, as is the chancel arch. There hangs on the east respond of the north aisle a complete hour glass in its iron frame over a stone corbel. The magnificent stone screen here of the sixteenth century is a double one with a vaulted passage between the two faces. The pilasters are adorned with figures of the Apostles. This is the loveliest thing in the church. The tower of three stages is of the fifteenth century.

But delightful though Cherhill and Compton Bassett surely are, they are quite put into the shade of our affection by Bremhill, which is, I suppose, one of the most remarkable villages in the county, for it not only boasts a fine church and two crosses, and was in possession of the Benedictine Abbey of Malmesbury, but it could itself show the only Cistercian house in Wiltshire, Stanley Abbey. And then to all this must be added the old world charm and country beauty of Bremhill itself.

The antiquity of the place is apparent, and one is not surprised to find it in Domesday Book, a possession of Malmesbury Abbey to which it had been granted by Athelstan in 938. That great Benedictine house held it till the Dissolution, and established a grange here on the site of the Manor Farm. At the Dissolution the manor was bought by Sir Edward Baynton, but the church remained with the See of Salisbury, which had acquired it from the Abbey in the thirteenth century, by a decision of the Pope in a quarrel between the Abbot and the Bishop.

The church of St. Martin consists of nave with aisles, western tower, south porch with room over it and chancel. It was most brutally restored in the middle of the nineteenth century, when among other precious things, the fine screen was destroyed and the Transitional Norman arcades of the nave were rebuilt. A very fine font of this time, however, remains, and a stone pulpit of the fourteenth century. The rest of the church in so far as it is old, is Perpendicular, the most notable thing about it being the passage, as at Hilmarton and Great Somerford, from the chancel to the north aisle, which, as I have said, was probably used by the priest bearing the Host to pass from one altar to the other without going into the nave. At the east end of the north aisle there still remains an aumbry, as there does a complete piscina at the east end of the south aisle. The

chancel, too, boasts a piscina, and a curious, if unpleasing, monument to George Hungerford (d. 1698). The pews in the nave contain some fine old work. The bell cot for the Sanctus bell still remains over the eastern gable of the nave.

The churchyard is spacious and beautiful and boasts an old cross, now surmounted by a sundial, upon which, as upon very many of the gravestones there, Canon Bowles, who was parson here for some forty years (1805–1845), has inscribed his melancholy doggerel. These epitaphs have nothing even of the graceful feebleness of his early sonnets. As chronicler rather than historian of Bremhill, he is to be loved rather than respected, and the shallowness of his scholarship is as well exhibited in his edition of Pope as the poverty of his taste in his translations, and the ridiculous egoism which encouraged him to carve his bad verses even over his dead parishioners. This egoism, however, seems to have been unconscious and inoffensive to his contemporaries, who found him simple and sincere, and he was much beloved.

But even Moore who knew him, and had some affection for him too, could not stand his æsthetic antics and his awful paraphernalia of sham medievalism. "He has frittered away the beauty of his garden with grottoes, hermitages and Shenstonian inscriptions," writes the Irishman. "When company is coming, he cries: 'Here, John, run with the crucifix and missal to the hermitage and set the fountain going.' His sheep-bells are tuned in thirds and fifths, but—he is an excellent fellow notwithstanding."

The desecrated cross in the churchyard, where there are more verses by Bowles than flowers, is more than matched by that in the middle of the village, which is complete or nearly so.

It was in the valley of the Marden, below Bremhill, between it and Studley, that there once stood in all its unadorned beauty the great Cistercian house of Wiltshire, Stanley Abbey. Nothing is now left of it but a few stones, capitals or bases of pillars, and though its site is well known and has even been in part excavated by Mr. Brakspear, it is scarcely worth a visit from anyone, unless, indeed, even the site of such a place has irresistible attractions for him, as I confess it has for me. The Abbey stood upon the southern bank of the stream which joins the Avon, less than two miles away westward.

Stanley Abbey indirectly owes its foundation to Drogo, Chamberlain of the Empress Matilda, to whom both she and her son Henry of Anjou, afterwards Henry II., gave Lockswell on Bowden Hill within the forest, the manor and the parish of Chippenham. This Drogo gave the place to St. Mary of Quarr[1] in the Isle of Wight, then Cistercian, on condition that this valley should found a daughter house there. This was done, and after the benefactor, and because the place was full of fresh watersprings, was called De Dragonis Fonte, or as it was Englished, Drowntont, and all this befell in 1151.

The Cistercians had just come into England in 1128, when the monastery of Waverley in Surrey was founded. They were at once the most popular and the most English of all the greater congregations, their houses came to be more numerous than any other, and the order in some sort owed its foundation to an Englishman, Stephen Harding, of Sherborne, though, indeed, it was St. Bernard and Citeaux which really established the White Monks.

"Bernardus valles, colles Benedictus amabat," we read, and it is not surprising then to find that three years after its foundation the monks of Drowntont forsook Lockswell and established themselves at Stanley by the Marden in the rich and glorious valley of the western Avon.

Building was begun on the new site, Mr. Brakespear tells us, in 1204, and though there seems, curiously enough, to have been some difficulty about water, for in 1214 the abbot Thomas of Calstone completed an aqueduct from the springs of Lockswell to the new house, in 1247 the new monastery was complete, with at least the eastern part of the church built. The church, dedicated in honour of our Lady, as always with the Cistercians, was consecrated in 1260 by Walter de Wylye, Bishop of Sarum.

All went well, and the valley flourished, for the Cistercians were great farmers, till in August, 1535, two of Cromwell's spies visited the convent. Those were the infamous Thomas

[1] Quarr Abbey lately refounded on the old site by the Benedictines of Solesmes was founded in 1131 by Baldwin, the second de Redvers, Lord of the Wight. It was an abbey of the Savigny order, a French reform of the Benedictine which boasted thirteen French and fifteen English houses. All were absorbed by the Cistercians in 1147, four years, that is to say, before the foundation of Dunkeswell, which then, though a daughter of a house which had been of the Savigny order, was Cistercian from its birth.

Legh and John ap Rice. The latter reports to Cromwell, "At Stanley the abbott confessed incontinencies before he was abbot, and VI or VII of the convent have confessed incontinencie." But later this miserable Welshman writes:—"Thomas Legh (his coadjutor) handleth the Fathers where he cometh very roughely and many tymes for small causes as the abbots of Brueton and Stanley and Mr. . . . of Edington for not meeting hym at the doore whene they had no warnyng of his comyng. Also I require more modestie, gravitie, and affabilitie whiche wolde purchase hym more reverence than his owne setting foorth and satrapike countenaunce. The man is yong and of intolerable elation of mynd."

When thieves fall out honest men come by their own. Alas! not always is it so. That letter brands these two creatures of Cromwell for what they were, but there were other devils worse than they, and these had decided upon the spoliation of Stanley Abbey. This befell in 1536. There were then ten religious in the monastery "of honeste conversacion all desyringe contynuance in religion," and the church and mansion were in a very good state, part new builded. All was granted to Sir Edward Baynton of Bromham for £1,200 paid in instalments. He destroyed the abbey to make his house at Bromham out of the ruins. "Here is now scarce left any vestigium of church or house," writes Aubrey.

The Bayntons perished. The site of Stanley came to Mrs. Starkey at last, and was bought at her death by the Marquess of Lansdowne, who still holds it. His great house, or palace rather, of Bowood stands beyond Black Dog Hill, not more than two miles south of Stanley Abbey—the place where Stanley Abbey stood. Stanley, on the south side of the Marden, stood just within the forest of Chippenham, which included that of Pewsham, and so does Bowood. When the forest was broken up and disafforested in the time of James I., Bowood Park still continued to belong to the Crown; it was known as King's Bowood, and King James granted a lease of it to the Earl of Pembroke. But when King Charles was dead the Commonwealth seized upon it and cut down all the timber. But at the Restoration it returned to the King, and a long lease of it was granted to Sir Orlando Bridgeman, a lawyer, who presided at the trial of the Regicides. This family held the place till, in the middle of the eighteenth century, it was sold to the Earl

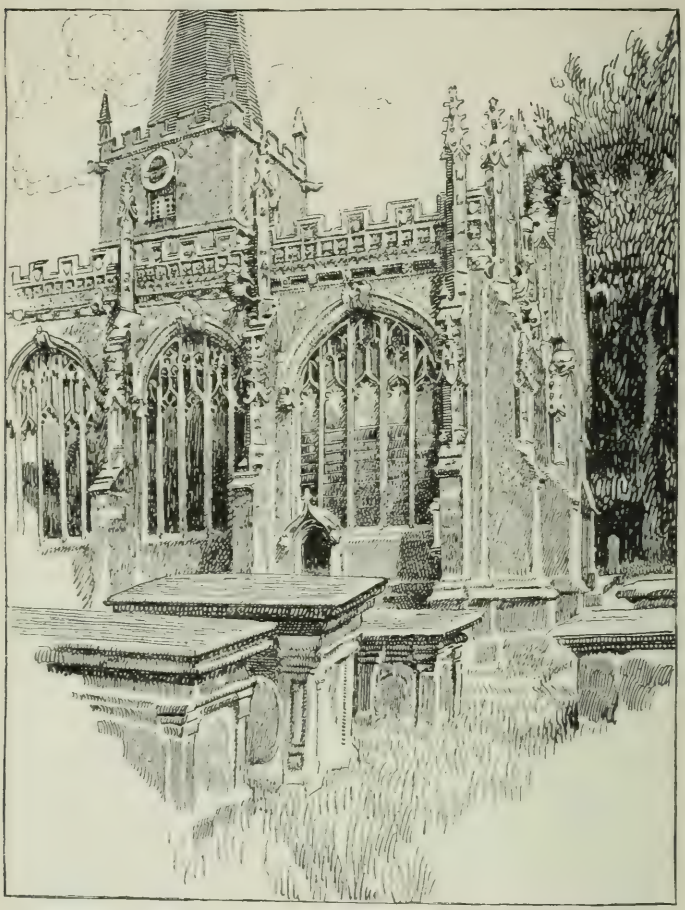
of Shelburne. It was the son of the purchaser, the Prime Minister of George III., who built the present house, which, however, has been much added to since, and laid out the gardens and grounds under the direction of the famous "Capability" Brown. He, too, formed the collection of MSS. now in the British Museum, and was, indeed, a patron of all the Arts, even Dr. Johnson visiting him at Bowood, though this is not mentioned by Boswell. But the famous visitors here are legion, and number among them half the people of note in Europe. I may mention, perhaps, Mirabeau, Talleyrand, Mme. de Staël; and of poets, Crabbe and Moore; of antiquaries, Britton and Bowles of Bremhill; of philosophers, Priestley and Jeremy Bentham. Nothing could be more beautiful than the park and gardens about the house, and the house itself is an example of the best genius of the Brothers Adam, while its magnificent collection of pictures of all schools is famous through Europe.

Beyond Bowood over the hill southward is Spye Park, which boasts the wildest and loveliest park in Wiltshire, and certainly has the finest views, for it looks right over south Wilts to the Dorset highlands. Here the Bayntons established themselves when their house at Bromham, the house they had built from the ruins of Stanley, was happily destroyed in the earlier years of the Great Rebellion. With them they brought the great embattled gate house of their old mansion and set it up here, as you may still see. But nothing the Bayntons could do after the rape of Stanley Abbey might endure. Their new house perished even as the old: and that we see was built, and not by a Baynton, in 1870. The Baynton mansion here was, according to Evelyn who stayed there, "a long single house of two low stories on the precipice of an incomparable prospect." The new house occupies the old site.

But who were these Bayntons? If you would know that, you must go down past Wans House, and Oliver's Camp, that earthwork looking over the vale where the old Roman road to Speen crosses the highroad to Devizes and Chippenham, where the Roman station of Verlucio is thought to have stood, and where a Roman villa with a pavement in mosaic representing a Roman soldier was discovered in 1705, and a Roman building of more considerable extent in 1907, to Bromham in the vale, one of the loveliest of Wiltshire villages.

Bromham in the time of the Confessor was the lordship of

Earl Harold. In the fifteenth century it belonged to Lord St. Amand, and from his son it passed to his cousins, the Bayntons.



Bromham Church. Thomas Moore buried here. 3½ *miles N.W. of Devizes.*

These people got Bromham just at the right moment. They were able to build their house with the spoil of the monasteries.

Sir Edward Baynton was Latimer's patron. They flourished. In 1616, 1618, and 1621, King James I. was their guest. Then came the White King and found them out, so that in 1645 the house was burnt by Colonel Lloyd, and the Bayntons built a new one on the hill, as we have seen.

They lie, quite a host of them, in the church here, the church of St. Nicholas. This is, save for the north and west walls of the nave and the lower part of the tower, which are Norman, a Perpendicular building. Its glory, however, lies in the south transept and chapel, which were, the one remodelled and the other erected, by William Beauchamp Lord St. Armand, who there founded a chantry in honour of our Lady. The transept with its elaborate ceiling is magnificent; but what are we to say of the chapel? To begin with, it is an exact counterpart of the south chapel in St. John's, Devizes, which was also founded by St. Amand. It is a truly marvellous example of late Gothic, exquisite within and without, parapeted and pinnacled, and most profusely ornamented, enriched with carving and adorned with two canopied niches for the figures of St. Mary and St. Nicholas, and covered by a noble carved roof, the whole gorgeous with gold and colour. St. Amand himself lies not here. In the midst of the chapel is an altar tomb of purbeck with recumbent effigy in full armour, but it is that of Sir Roger Touchet (d. 1457). On the north side, however, is the fine canopied tomb of his mother, Elizabeth Beauchamp, and a brass effigy of a kneeling figure in the dress of that time. Then come the Bayntons. First there is John, who got Bromham; his brass effigy is on the floor (d. 1516). And there against the south wall is the canopied tomb of Sir Edward Baynton (d. 1578), who spoiled and overthrew Stanley Abbey and built his house out of its holy stones. He lies there with his two wives and children; they are represented kneeling, in brass. And others of the stock lie here too; but enough of them. I would here remember one to whom we owe no grudge, who gave instead of took: I mean the Irish poet, Thomas Moore, to whom the west window in which we see the Last Judgment is an unaccountable memorial, and who lies buried in the churchyard where a good Irish cross has been erected lately to his memory.

Tom Moore came here in 1817, when he was thirty-eight, and lived and wrote here till he died at the age of seventy-two. You may still see his cottage at Sloperton, indeed one passes it

on the way in to Bromham from Spye Park and Verlucio, and a very charming ivy-grown cottage it is—more than a cottage, indeed quite a house. Anyone could be happy there, and even the poet of *Irish Melodies* seems to have succeeded in being so. Perhaps it was with a thought of this vale he wrote one of the sweetest and most genuine of his lyrics :—

"At the mid hour of night when stars are weeping I fly
To the lone vale we loved when life shone warm in thine eye,
And I think oft if spirits can steal from the region of air
To revisit past scenes of delight, thou wilt come to me there
And tell me our love is remember'd even in the sky.

"Then I sing the wild song it once was rapture to hear
When our voices commingling, breathed like one on the ear
And an Echo far off through the vale my sad orison rolls
I think, O my Love, 'tis thy voice from the kingdom of souls
Faintly answering still the notes that once were so dear."



Passage Street, Lacock

CHAPTER XXV

THE VALLEY OF THE WESTERN AVON: LACOCK, MELKSHAM, THE ASHTONS, NORTH BRADLEY AND TROWBRIDGE

I LEFT Bromham one morning for Lacock, going first northward as far as Wans House, and there turning westward again about Spye Park, and so across Bewley Heath down Hill into the meads of Avon where Lacock Abbey stood, and in some sort still stands to the east of Lacock village.

That village is, I think, easily the most remarkable and the most beautiful in all Wiltshire. It is beautiful not only by reason of its situation in the meadows beside the river between the eastern and western hills which are not here more than two miles apart, so that Lacock lies in a kind of pass, the pass of the river north and south; but by reason of its noble medieval buildings, the extensive and splendid remains of the Augustinian convent, the grand old mansion Bewley Court, a glorious church, a great fourteenth century barn, an ancient village cross, and I know not how many fine old houses, indeed the whole place seems full of them, so that altogether Lacock is a place by itself to be beloved for its own sake, to be visited again and again.

And first as to the Abbey.

The manor of Lacock formed part of the great possessions of the Norman Earls of Salisbury. The second Earl died without male issue and his heiress, the greatest in the kingdom, Ela Countess of Salisbury, thus in her own right, was given in marriage in 1198 to the natural son of Henry II. and Fair Rosamund as it is thought, the famous William Longespée who lies in Salisbury Cathedral in one of the noblest thirteenth century tombs in the world. Longespée died in 1226, and in the seventh year of her widowhood Ela founded two religious houses on one and the same day—"primo mane XVI Kal Maij a° MCCXXXIJ apud Lacock . . . et Henton post nonam a° vero aetatis suae XLV"—Lacock in the morning and Hinton[1] after nones.

The abbey of Lacock, an abbey of Augustinian nuns, Canonesses, was founded by Ela in the meads to the east of Lacock in a place called Snaylesmede by the Avon. The place, it is said, had been divinely revealed to her, and she founded the house in honour of St. Mary and St. Bernard for the salvation of her soul and that of her husband, and of their ancestors. No doubt the nuns of Lacock prayed for the repose of Fair Rosamund.

Lacock was thus founded in 1232 and in 1238, when the main buildings were finished, Countess Ela, then fifty years old, took the veil guided by the counsel of St. Edmund Archbishop of Canterbury, and in September, 1240, she became the first Abbess. Seventeen years later, on January 31, 1257, in the seventieth year of her age, she retired from this dignity, and within the octave of the birthday of the Blessed Virgin, 1261, she died and was buried in the choir of her Abbey Church.[2]

Almost exactly 300 years after Ela took the veil Lacock Abbey was suppressed by Henry VIII. It was surrendered on January 21, 1539. There were then within the convent seventeen religious with four chaplains, and some thirty-eight servants including fifteen hinds attached to the service of the house.

[1] Hinton Charterhouse in Somerset was rather a refoundation of a house founded originally by Longespée himself. (See my *Highways and Byways in Somerset*, p. 75). It was the second Carthusian house to be founded in England.

[2] Apparently when the church was destroyed the memorial stone commemorating her resting place was removed and placed in the cloister, where it remains. In the chapter house is the similar slab of Sebertus de Cnut, brought from Monkton Farleigh.



Lacock Abbey.

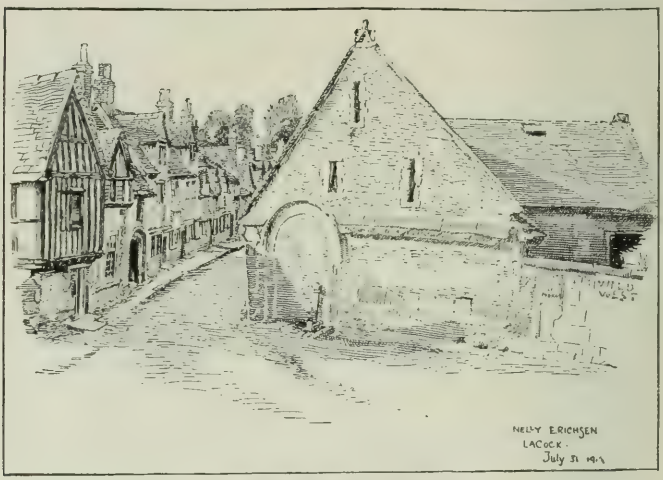
The church and convent with its houses were all " in very good estate," and nothing was owing. Upon June 16, 1540, the abbey and its possessions were granted by the King to Sir William Sharington on payment of £100, a deposit, one supposes, of the £783 paid in all. He immediately destroyed the church and converted the convent into a manor house. " What he allowed to remain," Mr. Brakspear tells us, " is in a wonderful state of preservation, never having been exposed to the ravages of the plunderer and the weather ; but what is destroyed was destroyed so completely that in places even the very foundations are entirely obliterated."

The extent of the convent was considerable ; within the precinct was an area of about 18 acres. It was bounded on the south by the Bath road, on the east by the Avon, on the north by the Fish Ponds and the churchyard, and on the west by the Home Farm of the Abbey. The great buildings of the convent stood nearer the eastern boundary than the western and were grouped about the cloister, which in its fifteenth century form largely remains. To the west of this was the Abbess's lodging and Hall, and beyond the great outer court, all the buildings of which have been destroyed. To the north was the Refectory, over a crypt or cellarage. To the east stood from north to south the Library, the Chapter House and Sacristy, and over them the Dormitory of the nuns. To the south of these and of the cloister stood the church, only the north wall of which, pierced with modern windows, remains. All these buildings save the church have been adapted, remodelled and added to form the present house, a work begun by Sir William Sharington in 1541, and continued almost to the present day. All the sixteenth century work of Sir William Sharington is of great beauty, and is worthy of as careful study as the thirteenth century work of the convent buildings or the splendid fifteenth century cloisters. Consider, for instance, the octagonal tower at the south-east corner with its three rooms, one above the other, its vaulted ceilings and Renaissance stone tables. The whole place indeed is a treasure-house of beauty, one of the most interesting and precious buildings left to us in England and preserved as it is by love and reverence nothing less than a miracle. What Sir William Sharington spared he jealously guarded and his successors, the Talbots, even to this day have been not at all behind him in this.



Lacock Abbey from the Avon.

The Talbots, I know not with how much truth, are said by Aubrey, who was personally acquainted with the grandson of the lady, to owe their possession of Lacock Abbey to a romantic love story. It seems that Olivia, daughter of Sir Henry Sharington, fell in love with John Talbot of Salwarpe in Worcestershire, and this to the great anger of her father. "Discoursing one night with her lover from the battlements of the abbey, said she, 'I will leape downe to you.' Her sweetheart answered he would catch her then; but he did not believe she would

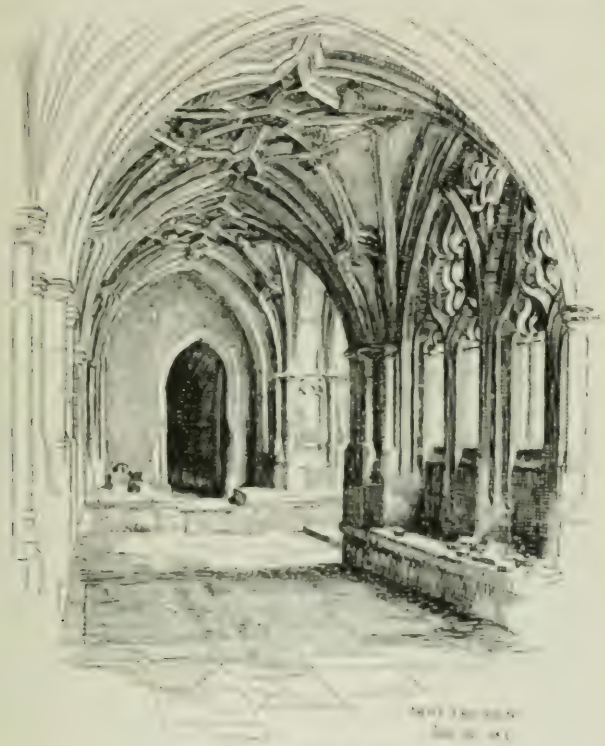


The Tithe Barn, Lacock.

have done it. Nevertheless she leapt down and the wind which was then high came under her coates and did something break her fall. Mr. Talbot caught her in his arms but she struck him dead; she cried for help and he was with great difficulty brought to life again. Her father theron (unlike the barbarous parent of Keevil) told her that since she had made such a leap she should e'en marrie him," which of course she did and lived happy ever after.

To the north-west of the abbey precincts, and at the entrance of the village as it were, stands the church dedicated in honour of St. Cyriac, deacon and martyr, in the time of Diocletian

(303). Perhaps the church once possessed a relic of him; it is difficult otherwise to account for the dedication. Mr. C. H. Talbot of Lacock Abbey, who has made a special study of the



The Cloisters, Lacock Abbey

church, considers that a Norman church once stood there, and that some part of it remained standing in the fifteenth century. He has found fragments of this building, but nothing of it remains in the present church, which is cruciform without a central tower, and contains no work earlier than the fourteenth century. The earliest part is the north transept, which is of the

first half of the fourteenth century. The south transept and perhaps the chancel were also of this time, but they have both been rebuilt. The nave, with its roof, north aisle and tower, are of the middle of the fifteenth century, but the tower has been raised and otherwise altered, the spire being a later addition, as well as the fine and unusual western porch.

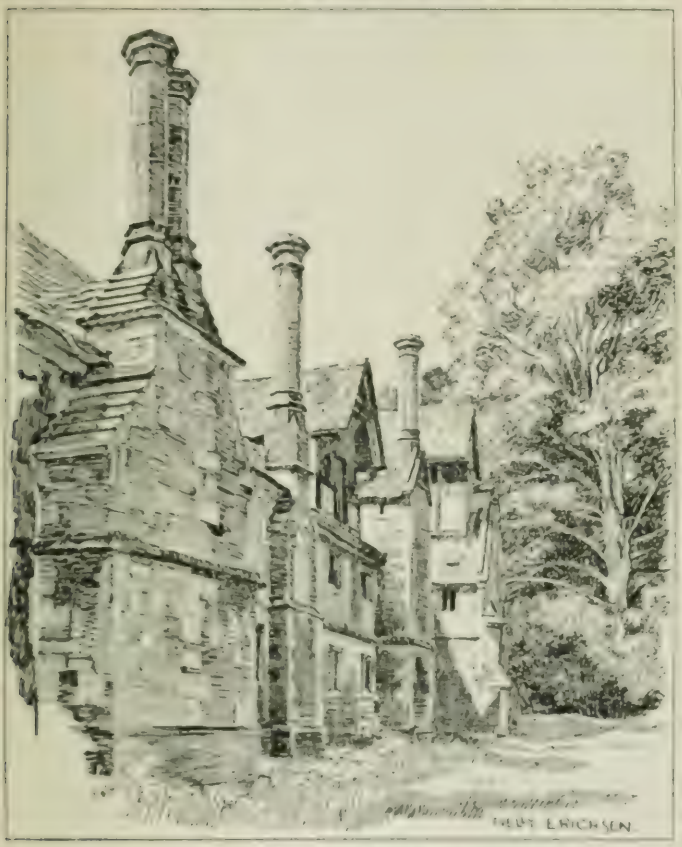
But the glory of the church is the chantry chapel on the north of the chancel. This dates from the end of the fourteenth century and is truly magnificent, its elaborately moulded and carved arches, the pendant groining, the ribs carved with foliage in the eastern bay, the niches in the angles supporting the springers, indeed, the whole richly ornamented construction of the chapel is lovely even in its ruin. No doubt once the beauty of this chapel was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. Here lies Sir William Sharington, who bought Lacock Abbey from the King, in a noble Renaissance tomb (d. 1566).

In the south transept is a brass with the effigies of Robert Baynard and his wife Elizabeth and their eighteen children, one of them dressed as a priest (1501). A beautiful medieval covered cup is used as a chalice, though not originally made for this purpose.

Close to the west end of the church is the Nurses' Home. This red brick house is the last one might expect to find possessed of any medieval treasure, but, within, the timber framing and roof of a fourteenth century hall with oak doorway are to be seen. Lacock is full of such things. A little further on, indeed, there is another fourteenth century doorway. The Old Angel Inn is a fifteenth century house with additions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Close by is another fourteenth century house, and there are others again. Everywhere one turns here one finds something ancient and beautiful. For Lacock is the most precious and wonderful village in Wiltshire, and yet, withal, rich as it is, what must it have been like before the abbey was destroyed and the nuns turned into the street, before Sharington appeared or ever received Queen Bess at the abbey, and a knighthood in return for his hospitality? As it is, where in Wiltshire, nay, perhaps in all south England, shall we find anything to match it? It was with infinite regret that I set out on the road for Trowbridge.

Some four miles to the south of Lacock upon that road stands the old market town of Melksham, whose manor with the Forest

of Melksham was royal demesne both before and after the Conquest. The wardenship of the forest was usually held with



Three Cornered Lovell Arms

that of Chippenham. The town, which stands on the eastern bank of the Avon, consists for the most part of one street, and decayed though it is, for its great days in modern times were those when cloth was made all over the south-west of England, a part

of it still bears the name of "the city," though assuredly here was never a bishopric. Unfortunately, Melksham is almost all new made. Its town hall was built in 1847, and even its church of St. Michael has been so much altered in recent years as to be difficult to understand. That a Norman church stood here the antiquity of the place would assure us even without the evidence of the narrowing chancel walls with their interlaced arcades. Norman masonry is also to be found in the west walls of the aisles in which thirteenth century windows have been inserted. The arcades of the nave are of the early fourteenth century, and the rest of the church, the transepts and porch and chapels, save that between transepts and south chapel which is modern, seems to be additions or rebuildings of the end of the fifteenth century. The old central tower is gone, that at the west end being a modern work with old material. The church possesses a pre-Reformation paten of some interest and two Elizabethan chalices. An old fourteenth century barn near the west end of the church has been converted into a school.

From Melksham I went out to Seend, passing on the way Bower House, a red brick building of 1631, and the oak upon which Cromwell is said to hava hanged three men for pillaging. I went to Seend chiefly because Lord Berners, the famous translator of Froissart, owned the manor there, and entered, alas! into a long lawsuit with regard to this and other property, so that at last he directed his executors to sell it "for his soul's health." I suppose they founded a chantry for him somewhere, perhaps in Seend church. He died in 1533, having been present at the Field of the Cloth of Gold. In some sort the old manor house remains. Before Lord Berners' time it had belonged to Humphrey de Bohun, who had leave to fortify it.

The church I found not very interesting, and I looked in vain for any sign of Lord Berners' chantry. If it ever existed, it has long since been swept away. The north aisle was built by John Stokys, who lies there under a good brass (1498) with his wife. The family was notable: Adrian Stokes married Frances Duchess of Suffolk. Their device, a pair of shears, is to be seen in the west window of the aisle here in Seend church.

From Seend I went on through Great Hinton to Keevil, where the fine, though restored and altered, timber-framed house of Talboys dating, as we see it, not earlier than the time of Edward IV., is very well worth attention. The arms on the gallery of

the Hall, according to Sir W. H. St. John Hope, are of seventeenth century date. Opposite is the fine Jacobean manor house with a noble stone front, and panelled hall with a Jacobean screen still complete, the whole being, indeed, one of the finest buildings of its period in the county. It appears to have been built about 1580 by one of the Lamberts, who sold it in 1680 to William Beach of Fittleton. A romantic story is told of Anne, daughter of Michael Hicks-Beach, who fell in love with William Wainhouse, the curate of the parish, and was for two years locked up by her father in the porch room over the entry, from the window of which she could see her lover as he went about his duties. At the end of two years the barbarous father offered her her choice of her lover or his fortune. She chose the former, as any high spirited girl would after such brutal treatment, but she died three months after.

There are also some fine old cottages at Keevil, but the church, an Early English building, was unfortunately remodelled in the seventeenth century, to which time the various monuments belong.

To the south of Keevil lie the Ashtons, to be reached by returning nearly to Great Hinton and thence passing over Ashton Hill to Steeple Ashton, where there is a fine church as well as a fourteenth century house and a restored market cross. This market cross, which is said to date, as we see it, from 1670, serves to remind us that the first name of Steeple Ashton was originally Staple, and distinguished it as a market. The prefix is said, however, to date only from 1387, when the market rights were granted by charter. Leland speaks of its "clothiers," which, however, the fires from which it suffered in the sixteenth century drove away to Market Lavington. The manor house, which is Elizabethan with Jacobean additions, is worth notice. In the garden is a picturesque red brick granary, possibly of the seventeenth century, standing on stone columns.

But pretty and interesting though the village is, its chief treasure is its church, a building of very great dignity and interest. It is dedicated in honour of our Lady, and on a brass plate at the west end we read the following inscription, said to be a copy of one on the wall under the north clerestory opposite the porch and now destroyed: "This church was founded unto the Honour of Almighty God between the years of our Lord 1480 and 1500. The North Isle was built at the Cost and Charge

of Robert Long and Edith his Wife. The South Isle for the most part was Built at the Cost and Charge of Walter Leucas and Maud his Wife. The Rest of the Church with the Steeple was Built at the Cost and Charge of the Parishioners then living. Newly Recorded by Stephen Wilkins and William Silverthorn, churchwardens."

Leland, who was here in 1540, also speaks of the "very fayre chirche buylded in the mynd of men now lyvinge." He also speaks of the "spired steple of stone very fayre and highe and



Steeple Ashton, 3 miles E. of Trowbridge.

of that it is cawllyd Steeple Ashton." This spire, 93 feet high above the tower, was seriously injured by lightning in 1670, but though the parishioners repaired it in October of the same year it was again thrown down and never repaired. This event is also recounted on a second brass at the west end of the church.

The tower, which that second catastrophe damaged, remains, however, the earliest part of the church we see. Mr. Ponting assures us that it is not later than 1400–20. It probably, therefore, belonged to an earlier church than this, which now consists of clerestoried nave, with aisles of four bays, north and south

porches, chancel with north and south chapels, beside the western tower of four stages, which, with its aisle, is of Transitional work between Decorated and Perpendicular, but the parapets and pinnacles are later. The work commemorated in the inscription at the west end of the church consists, as we know, of the nave, the aisles and porches and the two chapels of the modern chancel. These make a finely proportioned whole, if the work is somewhat coarse. The nave has a fine oak panelled roof. The aisles and chapels are vaulted in stone, and the best of them is the north or Lady Chapel, now most barbarously fitted with an organ. There on the bosses we see on the east bay in the midst our Lady in a mandorla, supported by four angels, her hands clasped, and around emblems of the four Evangelists. In the west bay in the midst our Lord in Benediction, the orb in His left hand, around the four major prophets and three female figures, perhaps Esther, the Queen of Sheba and St. Anne. The whole subject is the Coronation of the Blessed Virgin. In the centre of the chapel here is a corbel supporting a niche. The corbel is carved in the form of an angel holding a shield with the monogram of a cross composed upon the letter M, signifying, I presume, "Jesu Maria."

In the east bay of the north aisle is a brass with the device of a "tun," a barrel with a sprig growing from the end of it. I imagine this signifies Ashton. The vaulting springs from canopied niches here, too, as it does in the chapels, supported by corbels carved with various figures. Over the north door is also a fine niche. The north porch is smaller than the south, which has a parvise over it. There is a priest's door under the west window of the south chapel. Numerous fragments of old glass glorify the windows. The monuments, brasses, and tombs are for the most part those of the Longs and Beaches, and date from the seventeenth century.

The fourteenth century hall and porch of the vicarage, of which I have spoken, should be seen if possible.

The manor of Ashton, which included all this group of places with various first names—Steeple or Market Ashton, Chapel or Rood Ashton, East, West and Middle Ashton—anciently belonged to the kings of Wessex, and by King Edgar in 959 was given to the Nunnery of St. Mary of Romsey in Hampshire. With that convent the manor remained till the Dissolution, when it passed to Sir Thomas Seymour, who held it till his

execution in 1550. Steeple Ashton was the market here, as we have seen, and as it might seem Chapel or Rood Ashton was perhaps always, as it certainly became, the seat of the Lord of the Manor. Here was established a chapel for the household; here was set up a great Crucifix, perhaps. According to Canon Jackson, however, Rood Ashton was never part of the demesne land of Romsey Abbey, but was held by various owners from the abbess. The first of these was John Benet (d. 1306), whose ancestor founded the priory of Maiden Bradley, and in the last year of the sixteenth century the Longs appear here, and there in a fine, great house set in a park of 700 acres, the present representative of that famous Wiltshire family lives to this day.

From Rood Ashton, a mile south-west of Steeple Ashton, through West Ashton, it is a little more than three miles to North Bradley, which is in the midst of country rich in architectural treasures. To begin with, the church of St. Nicholas in the village is a very fine one of curious and picturesque form, very successful and pleasing. It consists of clerestoried nave and aisle with chancel and two chapels; that on the north fills the eastern bay of the arcade; that on the south not only does the same, but is continued eastward beside the chancel. This chapel with the nave arcade is of the fourteenth century. In the fifteenth the church was remodelled, the clerestory added to the nave, the north chapel was erected, and the chancel aisles, porch, and tower rebuilt.

The north chapel is beautiful. In the north wall is the recessed founder's tomb, very richly panelled and pinnacled, with the incised effigy of Emma (d. 1446), mother of Archbishop Stafford of Canterbury, who lived at Southwick Court hard by, an old moated manor house now a farm, but well worth a visit.

Both north and south chapel keep their ancient roofs; that in the north chapel is very rich and splendid with carving. Note the panelled archways between the south chapel and the chancel and south aisle.

The font is a very fine one, octagonal, of Perpendicular date having the symbols of the four Evangelists and the instruments of the Passion carved upon it. An ancient pewter chalice with paten of the fourteenth century should be noted in the vestry. The tower, too, is worthy of Somerset.

Southwick Court is not the only old house in the neighbourhood of North Bradley that is worth a visit. Brook House to

the south calls for notice. Here, in what are now stables and cow house, are the domestic offices of a fifteenth century mansion the walls, floors, roofs, windows with grilles, fireplaces and doorways being still in place and almost unspoilt.

By such roundabout ways through this pleasant country with its noble views of down and woodland did I pass at last into the wide-awake little town of Trowbridge. This ancient and still flourishing place is for population the third town in Wiltshire, only outstripped, but that very considerably, by Swindon and Salisbury. Of its origins we are entirely ignorant. The entries in Domesday Book concerning it are three in number and deal with Trowbridge itself under the name of Straburg: there also we find Staverton and Trowle. All three were held by Brictric, that unfortunate noble who was sent by St. Edward the Confessor as his ambassador to the Court of Baldwin Count of Flanders. Now Baldwin had a daughter Matilda who fell in love with Brictric, but he, either because he was so thick headed or because the maid was ugly, would have nought to do with her, so that "the hatred wherewith she hated him was greater than the love wherewith she had loved him." Unfortunately for Brictric, a few years later she married Duke William of Normandy, and when he became King of England, Matilda was able, and, as it is said, not slow to claim her revenge. It seems certain that she deprived Brictric of several manors, among them of Brixton Deverill, but he would seem to have retained these at Trowbridge. Nevertheless, in 1100 his manors here were in possession of Edward of Salisbury, and at his death passed to his daughter Matilda, who brought them in marriage to Humphrey de Bohun, who founded the Cluniac monastery of Farleigh Monkton. It was this man who built Trowbridge Castle which, in 1139, was besieged by Stephen who, crossing to Trowbridge and "finding the place carefully fortified and the garrison prepared for all extremities unlikely to surrender without a desperate resistance, set to work to build engines with great toil that he might press the siege with vigour. But his efforts were fruitless, for the besieged were neither injured by his machines nor at all daunted by his blockade though it was long and strict. Of the barons therefore who were present at the siege some were soon weary, others were false . . . The King therefore after consulting his friends retired to London to rally his strength . . . He left however in the castle of Devizes for the annoyance of Trowbridge

to which it was near a chosen and disciplined body, and the two enemies in their hostile incursions soon reduced all the neighbouring country to a desolate solitude."

Nevertheless, it was under the protection of this castle that the town of Trowbridge grew up, with the help of the Flemish weavers introduced by Edward III., while the manor and castle passed to various owners, Ela Countess of Sarum, John of Gaunt himself, his son Henry Bolingbroke (afterwards Henry IV.), and finally in 1536 the manor was granted by Henry VIII. to the inevitable Seymour, afterwards Protector Somerset. It was then that Leland came by.

"I enterid," says he, "into the toune by a stone bridge of a 3 arches. The toune standith on a rocky hill and is very well buildid of stone and flourisheth by drapery. Of later tymes one *James Terumber* a very rich clothier buildid a notable fair house in this toune and gave it at his deth with other landes to the finding of 2 cantuarie prestes yn *Through-bridg* Church. This *Terumber* made also a little almose house by *Through-bridge* chirch [1] and yn it be a 6 poore folkes having a 3 pence a peace by the week toward their finding. *Horton* a clothier of *Bradeforde* buildid of late dayes dyvers fair houses in this toune . . .

"The church of Through bridge is lightsum and fair . . . The Castelle stoode on the south side of the toune. It is now clene down. There was in it 7 gret houses, whereof peaces of 2 yet stande."

The castle, a broken ruin in Leland's day, has now quite disappeared, and its site is covered with houses and factories. The curved line of the moat may be seen in Fore Street.

The church "lightsum and fair" was practically rebuilt in 1845. It is, however, still well worth a visit. It dates, as we we have it, from about 1475, and appears to have been erected chiefly by the efforts of James Terumber, "the rich clothier." No doubt earlier churches have stood here, and it is possible that John of Gaunt, as tradition asserts, built or rebuilt one here, in the fourteenth century. The chief feature of the present fifteenth century building is the lofty stone spire which may well date from the time of old John of Gaunt. Within the roof of the nave is curious and beautiful; but though we have here a stone vaulted chapel and a fine carved font, the chief interest of the church lies for us in the fact that George Crabbe, the poet,

[1] Finally destroyed, 1811.

was parson here from 1814 to 1832 and is buried in the chancel. He came here intolerably dreary after his wife's death and found himself in the midst of sympathetic and appreciative people, close to Bath, which was then the focus of fashion in southern England. Here he wrote "Tales from the Hall." It is said that his sermons did not at first please the people.

"'A moral teacher,' some contemptuous cried,
He smiled, but nothing of the fact denied."

He soon seems to have gained their respect, if not their affection. His rectory house is worth a visit, if only because it has some remains of the sixteenth century, while his library retains the bookcases he placed there, and his mulberry tree still grows in the garden. The Yorbury almshouses still remain from the seventeenth century.

Two villages of some interest lie to the north of Trowbridge, Semington and Whaddon.

The first of these boasts a fifteenth century chapel dedicated in honour of St. George, but rebuilt in 1860. Its one curiosity is the strange inscription on the east jamb of the porch doorway, where we read in Norman French: + KY PATER NOSTER : E : AVE MARIA : PUR LE ALME PUR FELEPPUR DE SALC EST : CHRESTIENS DURA : QUARANTE : JURS : DE PARDUN AVERA : AMEN. According to Canon Jackson this means: "Whosoever shall say a Paternoster and an Ave Maria for the souls of Philippa de Salcest (?) and Chrestiens shall have 40 days of pardon." This interpretation might seem to be inaccurate, however.

The little church at Whaddon is more interesting. It is dedicated in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and consists of nave, with modern chancel without division between them, a south porch and modern chapel north of the chancel. The nave is late Norman as are the north and south doorways, the latter being very fine, with a tympanum carved in relief with foliage and the sawtooth ornament in the label. The door is bound with fine ironwork. Within is a brass to Henry Long (d. 1612).

CHAPTER XXVI

THE VALLEY OF THE WESTERN AVON: BRADFORD-ON-AVON MONKTON FARLEIGH, CORSHAM AND BOX

From Trowbridge to Bradford-on-Avon is but three miles down the valley of the Avon, and at Bradford, as it happens, we have the most beautiful little town in all Wiltshire, a place really unique in England, so full of visible antiquity as to enchant and astonish us, and withal so picturesquely set under the escarpment of the hills which here thrust themselves southward in a great bastion, about which the Avon flows westward and south, as to delight us altogether with its beauty. That such a place should be without a history is not to be thought of, nor, indeed, are we thus disappointed.

Bradford doubtless gets its name from the broad ford over the Avon beside the bridge which was consistently in use for many hundred years until in recent times that bridge which till then was little more than a packhorse way was widened. That it was known to the Romans seems likely, for considerable numbers of coins have been found in the upper part of the town called Budbury; but the first event of which we have any knowledge here is of the Dark Age, the victory gained by Cenwealh King of Wessex in 652 over the Britons. This man, who had known exile and had there been converted to Christianity, had returned to complete the conversion of the west Saxons begun by Birinus; and it would seem that his victory of Bradford completed the Saxon conquest of Wessex. Not much more than fifty years later, in 705, a monastery of some sort was founded here by Aldhelm, then Bishop of Sherborne, and in 957 the Witanagemote was held here, at which Dunstan was appointed Bishop of Worcester. Evidently Bradford was then a place of some importance.

In 1001 King Ethelred conferred the manor of Bradford upon the Abbess of Shaftesbury as a place of safe refuge for herself and her nuns from the Danes, and as a sanctuary for the relics of St. Edward, King and Martyr. The Conquest did not rob the Abbey of the manor, and it seems that Bradford grew in importance thereafter, at any rate in the twelfth century a large parish church was built, which in some sort remains to the present day. All through the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Bradford increased in wealth, the woollen manufactures had been established here, as early as 1295 the burgus or borough of Bradford had been called upon to send two members to Parliament, and to these years the town owes the noble buildings we see as well as those we have lost. In 1539, when the Abbey of Shaftesbury was suppressed and the prebendal manor in Bradford was bestowed upon the new Dean and Chapter of Bristol, the lay manor was presently leased to the Earl of Pembroke, and later to Sir Francis Walsingham. But it was the clothiers who really owned Bradford. More than one of the townsmen had made a fortune, and in the seventeenth century Paul Methuen, the leading clothier, introduced spinners from Holland, who lived in that part of the town still known as "Dutch Barton." Another of these rich clothiers was John Hall who built Kingston House, one of the finest mansions in the county. Before these men had come to their full power and wealth after the destruction of the religious houses, Leland passed through Bradford and has left us the following account of it:—

"The toune clit of *Bradeford* standith on the clining of a slaty rokke, and hath meetely good market ons a weeke. The toune is made al of stone and standith as I cam to it on the hither ripe of *Avon*.

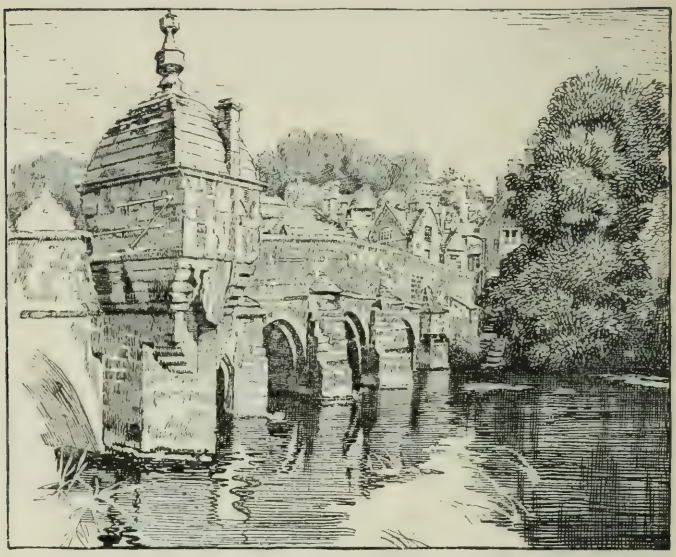
"Ther is a chapelle[1] on the highest place of the toune as I enterid. The fair larg parochc chirch standith bynethe the bridge on Avon ripe. The vicarage is at the west ende of the chirch.

"*Haulle* dwellith in a pratie stone house at the este ende of the toune on the right bank of Avon. There is a very fair

[1] Leland came in from Wraxhall. This chapel has disappeared almost, a fragment remaining supposed by some to speak of Tory Chapel, a chapel of the B.V.M., once ruinous, and now restored by the owner on the summit of Tory Hill.

house of the building of one *Horton* a riche clothier at the north est part of the chirch . . . This *Horton* buildid a goodly large chirch house *ex lapide quadrato* at the est end of the chirch yard, without it . . . Al the toun of *Bradeford* standith by clooth making. *Bradeford* Bridge hath 9 fair arches of stone."

A century later Aubrey came by, and beyond mentioning "Here is a strong and handsome bridge in the middest of which



Bridge Chapel, Bradford-on-Avon.

is a little chapelle as at Bathe for Masse," tells us almost nothing of the aspect of the place.

Of course, what strikes us most in these accounts is the omission of any allusion to the so-called Saxon church of St. Laurence, for which Bradford is now so famous.

The first reference we have to this wonderful little building is in the "Life of St. Aldhelm," written by William of Malmesbury. There the historian states that the West Saxon bishop was generally supposed to have built a monastery at Bradford, and adds, "to this day at that place there exists a little church

which he is said to have made in honour of the most Blessed St. Laurence." Now whether or no the church we now see was built by St. Aldhelm we shall discuss in a moment. First we have to confess that we have no history of the building at all. We do not even know when it disappeared. It was obviously not visible when Leland was at Bradford; Aubrey knows nothing of it. The truth is that, in course of time, though when we do not know, this precious building was entirely lost in the woollen factories that enclosed it on every side, so that until the year 1859 no one guessed its existence. Part of it was then used as a free school, and we are told "Everybody supposed it to be of the eighteenth century."

This remarkable building, which has now been quite disencumbered of the buildings which surrounded it and carefully put in order, stands to the north-east of the parish church. That it occupies the site of St. Aldhelm's "monastery" might seem very probable: at any rate, it stands in what has always been called the "Abbey Yard," and when the ground here was opened stone coffins were discovered. Before the church was discovered in 1859 the building was known as the Skull House. But even though we grant that this is the site of St. Aldhelm's "monastery," it seems very unlikely that we have here a building of his time.

What we see is a church consisting of nave, chancel, and porch on the north side. It originally had another and similar porch on the south in all probability, and was then a cruciform building. The nave is about twenty-five feet by thirteen feet, the chancel thirteen feet by ten feet, and the porch about ten feet square. What strikes one at once on entering is the height of the building in comparison with its length and breadth. This assures us of the early date of the work, as does the form of the chancel arch, which is, indeed, little more than a lofty doorway. Over it are two figures of angels something similar to those on the porch at Malmesbury, but evidently more primitive and more Byzantine. Now what can be the date of this little church of stone? It is largely believed by archæologists to be not later than the tenth century, and this after it has been found no longer possible to attribute it to St. Aldhelm himself. It is, of course, probable that St. Aldhelm's church was of wood and wattles. Here, too, we have though in stone rather the work of carpenters than of masons, and yet, even so,

I am not ready to accept a date so early as the tenth century for this building. We know that in the year 1001 King Ethelred conferred the manor of Bradford upon the Abbess of Shaftesbury, and it is to the abbey of Shaftesbury I should attribute this work, as one must do so much else in Bradford. For me the church of St. Laurence is no more Saxon than Westminster



Saxon Church, Bradford-on-Avon.

Abbey or Canterbury Cathedral is English. It is the work of the Normans if you like, but rather of an international society which drew its builders from the continent where civilisation was far more developed than in England before the Conquest.

In any case, and however we look at the matter, we possess in the little church of St. Laurence at Bradford-on-Avon one of the earliest churches in stone ever erected in these islands, and

the only one of its time which has come down to us practically complete.

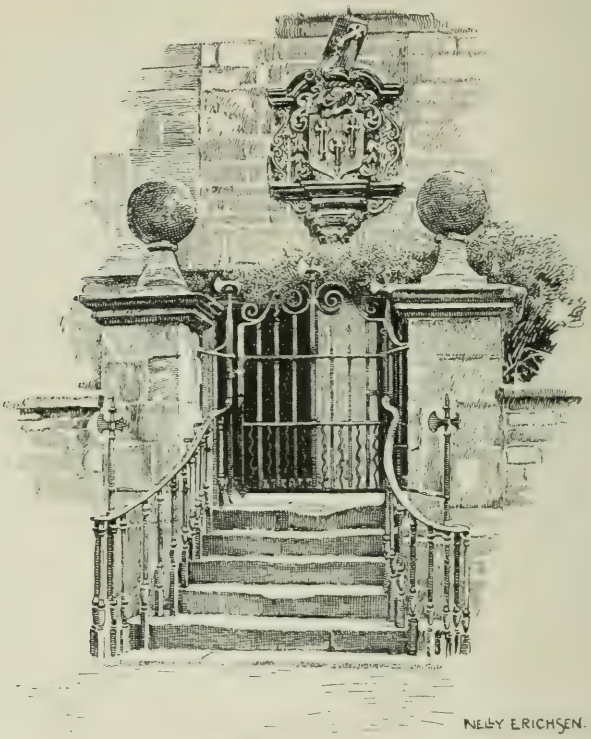
From this most precious relic we turn to the parish church of Holy Trinity. This consists of chancel, nave, north aisle, tower, and a mortuary chapel on the south built by one of the Hall family, of which Leland speaks, and now used as an organ chamber. The south wall of the nave and western part of the chancel date from about 1260; three original windows are still to be seen, one in the nave and two in the chancel. In the end of the thirteenth century the chancel was lengthened, and two recessed tombs—one on the north, and the other on the south—erected, which still possess mutilated effigies; a very lovely fragment of another female effigy from the north aisle is also now in the chancel. Then the north aisle was built, the western portion being the earlier part: this was a chantry chapel of St. Nicholas, while the later eastern part was the Lady Chapel. In the former is still a richly panelled recess for a crucifix. The tower dates from the first years of the sixteenth century, and the mortuary chapel is not much later. Unhappily, the church was restored in 1865, and the arcade is new. Besides the early monuments of which I have spoken, there is in the chancel a brass of the sixteenth century to the clothier, Thomas Horton (who perhaps built the tower) and to his wife; and another to Anne Long (d. 1601). The monument with full-length marble effigies commemorates Charles Steward and his wife (*temp.* James II.), and there are monuments to the Methuens and the Threshers. Outside the south door of the chancel is a curious tombstone, or, as it is said, a "dole stone." It is interesting to remember that William Byrd, afterwards chaplain to Walter Lord Hungerford of Farleigh Castle, was vicar here before he was attainted of treason and found guilty of heresy in 1539.[1]

Leaving the church, one ascends the steps beyond the tower, and there before one is the house of Edward Orpin, Gainsborough's parish clerk of Bradford. Then at the west end of the churchyard are the site and the remains of the house Leland names as "Horton's," in Dutch Barton. Passing on down Church Street one comes to another building mentioned by Leland—the Church House. This was built in the fifteenth

[1] See my *Highways and Byways in Somerset*.

century by one of the Hortons, and was, as its name implies, the scene of the church ales.

The modern town hall is without interest, but beyond it through the shambles is the Royal Oak Inn with a good fifteenth



John Hall's Almshouse, Bradford-on-Avon.

century doorway, and so passing on we soon come to Kingston House, without doubt the noblest piece of work in the town.

Kingston House seems to have been built in the first years of the seventeenth century by the John Hall who died in 1631. Perhaps it was begun by his father; at any rate, it was not

finished till many years after his death in 1597. It is built in a sort of Transition style, something that has not lost the charm of the old Tudor manner, and yet is full of the new Palladian nobility of Inigo Jones. It is, indeed, a perfect English house of the best period. The south front is divided into two storeys with attics in the gables. Everywhere there are great mullioned windows, the whole front consisting of three parts all parapeted, the middle projection being square, those on either side semi-circular. In the midst is a beautiful sculptured porch.

This glorious house of the Halls came at last to Rachel Baynton of Chalfield, who was the wife of Evelyn Pierrepont, son of the Marquis of Dorchester, afterwards first Duke of Kingston. It is from this man the house gets its name.

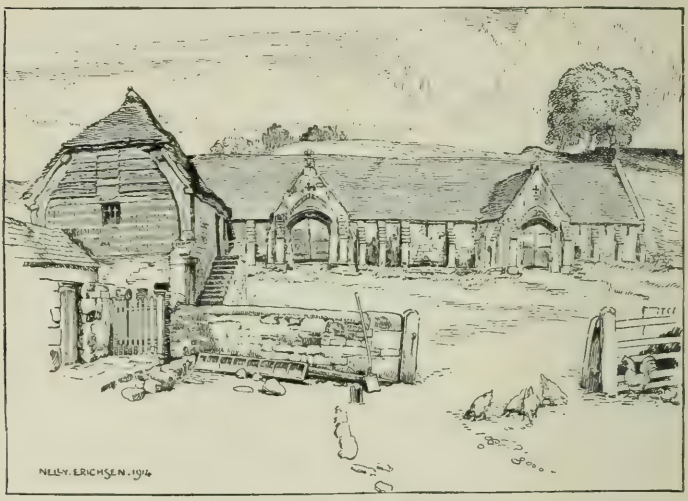
From the Market Place we turn down to the Town Bridge with the remains of its desecrated chapel. As I have said, this was originally merely a pack-horse bridge, but it has not only been widened but lengthened, for the chapel was not always in the midst of the bridge, but at its entrance on the south. It was, originally, I suppose, the hermitage of him who kept the way. Later, probably, it was a chapel "for masse," as Aubrey says. The vane at the top is, as we see, a fish, and according to Canon Jones it used to be a common saying among Bradford folk when the chapel was used as a lock-up, as they saw some culprit go by, "he wer a gwoing auver the water but under the vish."

In old days a hospital of St. Margaret stood close to this little chapel. It had been founded by Henry III. in 1235, but all trace of it is gone. It was standing in Leland's day. Perhaps its place was in some sort taken by the Old Men's Almshouse founded a hundred yards further on in 1700 by John Hall, *Deo et Pauperibus*. Older far than this, indeed of mediæval foundation, is the hospital of St. Katherine, an almshouse for old women.

Turning down to the left near this we come to Barton Farm, the Grange of the Abbess of Shaftesbury. Nothing is left, or almost nothing, of the house; but the grand old barn, 170 feet long and twenty feet wide, with, as it were, double transepts sixty feet wide, is fortunately left to us. It is a magnificent work in stone of the fourteenth century, with a noble roof of oak.

This is one of the finest things left to us in Bradford; but the too brief survey I have made of the place in no sense of the word exhausts the interest of the town, which is full of interesting

and picturesque corners, and, indeed, only begins to be loved when such a sight-seeing as I have indicated is no longer necessary or tolerable. Eminently a place to linger in and to love, Bradford rather than any other town in North Wiltshire will repay the visitor for his trouble in examining it. There is no other place in this part of the county that has so much to offer him, save, perhaps, Lacock. Lacock, of course, owes much of its interest, though not perhaps its beauty, to its religious house



The Barton Barn, Bradford-on-Avon.

there, so wonderfully preserved for us. Bradford has nothing like that to show, but, after all, Monkton Farleigh is not so far away, and Lacock has nothing to offer apart from the Abbey comparable with Great Chalfield and South Wraxall close to Bradford.

Before going on to these delights, which I had known ever since I was a boy, I turned aside to see once more the pretty church of Westwood, and the old manor house there.

Westwood lies deliciously to the south of Bradford, towards the woods of Farleigh. The church, which is interesting, was a chapel of ease for Bradford. Its earliest part is the chancel,

where at the eastern end there is a double piscina, and on the north a lancet window. This is of the thirteenth century. But the delight of the chancel is in its fifteenth century glass, which the late Canon Jones collected from the aisle and placed in the east and two side windows here in the chancel. There we see presented our Lord's Passion, with, in the midst, Christ on the Cross, which springs from a vessel out of which grows a lily, the emblem of our Lady. Here, too, are figures of St. John Baptist, St. Michael Archangel, SS. Peter and Paul. The aisle from which this glass came was built by one of the Hortons of Bradford. Part of the ceiling is fine. The pulpit is Jacobean, and part of it comes from Norton St. Philip. The tower is of a Somerset type.

The manor house, though restored, added to, and rebuilt, still remains delightful. It was that of the Hortons, and, if possible, should be seen for the sake of its oriel and the plaster ceilings of the seventeenth century.

Great Chalfield lies on quite the other side of Bradford. The beautiful group of buildings which make up the manor house are among the most interesting fifteenth century mansions in the county, the north front being nearly perfect, and perhaps really almost all that remains to us of the house Thomas Tropenell built in 1490. But I know not where else one gets quite so complete an idea of the life of an English county gentleman of that day. Here were, about this fine house, his farm yard, his granaries, barns and outbuildings. It is a beautiful ghost we see of simpler days than ours—days which, I suppose, come not again. The little church adjoins the house on the north—is, indeed, almost a part of it—and within the moat which girdles all. This has suffered as much or more than the house, but still remains like it a thing of beauty to be enjoyed and to be loved. The little bell turret with its spire fortunately still crowns the western gable, the porch and south chapel of the same date as the manor house still remain; but the fine stone screen which once guarded the chapel has been brutally thrust across the nave, not without mutilation. In the north-east of the churchyard stands a round tower of defence which, when the house was garrisoned, as it was in the Civil War, no doubt proved useful. It is pleasant to remind oneself that the water in the moat still turns a mill as it did, and in the very same place, at the time of the Domesday Survey.

If anything could outface Great Chalfield it is South Wraxall, some two miles to the north-west, where the noble and beautiful manor house that Robert Long of the old family of Rood Ashton built in the fifteenth century stands. The buildings here surround three sides of a court with the gatehouse to the south and the hall looking west. The place has been much pulled about, and was, in a sense, considerably spoilt in 1600.



Great Chalfield, Manor House.

But what can be more delightful than what we see? It is in such homes as these of Chalfield and South Wraxall that England really, if anywhere, abides. To turn from such a living antiquity as this to the ruined hospice of St. Andrew close by, an ancient chapel, hall, and house for the reception of travellers which, with the change of religion lost its vocation, is to realise, and poignantly, what I mean. And this impression, if need be, is confirmed in the parish church whose one interest for us lies in its pack-saddle tower, a rarity in Wiltshire.

The Cluniac monastery of Farleigh stands nobly above the

Avon valley, commanding views of the greatest beauty over Somerset and Wilts and up the deep vale that here divides them. Nothing could be well more different from the situation of this house than that of Lacock or Stanley; they are houses of the vale, but this, like Malmesbury, is of the hills. Yet it was by no means an invariable custom of the most feudal of the orders to build upon a height; the neighbouring Cluniac house at Montacute in Somerset, for all its name, lies at the foot of that pyramidal hill, and the mother house of Farleigh Lewes, the first Cluniac house in England, lies in the vale. Just as Cluny stands in point of time midway between the Benedictines proper and Citeaux, so it does in its choice of situation; it loved the hills with St. Benedict, but it did not at all refuse them as St. Bernard did later.

The first we hear of Farleigh, though the Roman coins that have been found here suggest a Roman occupation of some sort, which the line of the Roman road from London to Bath would support, is in the Domesday Survey, where it is recorded as the property of Brictric. From him it came into the hands of Edward of Salisbury, who bestowed it on his daughter Maud when she married Humphrey de Bohun, the lord, as we have seen, of Trowbridge Castle. It seems to have been she who founded the Cluniac house of St. Mary Magdalen here about the year 1125, and it is interesting to remember that two other houses in this valley, Lacock and Bradenstoke, were due to members of her family.

The order of Cluny, the first of the great Benedictine reforms, was founded in 910 at Cluny in the diocese of Maçon by William the Pious Duke of Aquitaine. For two hundred years thereafter the order absorbed all the best energy of monasticism. It met, encouraged, and used the great feudal theory which then began to sweep over Europe and remained the most feudal of all the orders to the end: every house derived and held of Cluny; every prior, there was but one abbot, owed allegiance only to the abbot of Cluny, and no religious could be professed anywhere in Europe save at Cluny and at the hands of its abbot. The splendour of Cluny was its schools and its marvellous ceremonial and services, which have never been rivalled even at Solesmes. It was this great order that Maud of Salisbury, the wife of the second Humphrey de Bohun, established here in Wiltshire. It is easy to understand that the dependence of

the houses of the order in England upon Cluny rendered them open to the charge of being alien priories, when with the rise of nationalism such jealousies became rampant, as they did, especially during the French wars at the end of the fourteenth century. Many houses of this order escaped suppression at that time by renouncing their allegiance from the mother house of Cluny, and acknowledging as the head of the order in England the Prior of Lewes, the oldest of the Cluniac houses in our island. Montacute did this in 1407 ; it was easier for Monkton Farleigh to do the same since it had always been in some sort a cell of Lewes.

Monkton endured, a noble and glorious thing, until the Dissolution of the religious houses under the eighth Henry. In 1527 it was " visited " by the infamous Layton, who, curiously enough, seeing what he invented, casts in his report to Cromwell no reflection upon its discipline. From Bristol, however, he sends to his master certain " strange things ; among them Mary Magdalen's girdle wrapped and covered with silver, which girdle Matilda the Empress, one of the founders of Farley, gave unto them, as says the holy father of Farley." The priory with all its property was granted by Henry to the Earl of Hertford, afterwards Protector Somerset ; but about 1550 he exchanged it with the see of Sarum.

Of the buildings of the priory very little remains, and of the conventual church nothing at all. This seems to have been utterly destroyed soon after the suppression, and the ground on which it stood became a rabbit warren. Recent excavations have brought to light certain fragments, among them some tomb-stones, one of which is at Lacock and another with a cross-legged effigy of one of the Dunstanvilles remain here. The manor house, which has in some of its outbuildings fragments of the refectory and certain very early lancet windows of much beauty, occupies the site of the monastery. A few hundred yards away to the north-west is a small thirteenth century building with a finely groined roof, known as the " Monks' Conduit," covering a spring of water. The remains of these buildings suggest the beauty of the old house, which was all of stone from the quarries close by. It is part of the irony of time that Bishop Jewel, the first Protestant to occupy the see of Sarum, and the destroyer of the famous glass in the cathedral church, after preaching his last sermon within sight of the ruins of one outraged house,



South Wraxall, Manor House.

came here to die in the midst of those of another ; an iconoclast, indeed, in whom there was no shame.

The church at Monkton Farleigh, unlike that at Lacock, where Jewel spent his last day, has been rebuilt, and but for the old tower and the Norman door and Elizabethan pulpit, which it keeps, would not be worth a visit.

From Monkton Farleigh I went down the great avenue of beeches to Upper Wraxall, and so northward into the hills again, to Chapel Plaster. Here is a very interesting hospice of the fifteenth century, consisting of chapel, priest's room, hospital, and porch at the west end. It is said to have been erected for the use of the Glastonbury pilgrims ; at any rate, it stands high up on Corsham ridge, half-way between Lacock and Bath and on the road from Corsham to Bradford. It, of course, fell into utter disuse and desecration with the advent of Protestantism, was used as a private dwelling, as the Queen Anne fireplace in the upper floor proves, and afterwards as a bakery, and later still as a mere lumber shed, till it came to be the headquarters of the notorious highwayman, Tom Baxter. It has now been restored, and is used by the Anglicans as a chapel of ease to Box.

The buildings date from two periods of the fifteenth century. The original building consisted of chapel, hospital, and priest's chamber, all on the level without upper storey, as can still be seen. The additions later in the fifteenth century consisted of a widening of the hospital and the addition of an upper floor to the priest's chamber. For the most part the building we see is essentially this. The chapel has at the east end a curious reredos of three canopied arches, the centre one having a semi-circular front, with, behind it in the buttress without a large circular hole for a lantern to guide the wayfarer on a dark night. The niche over the inner west door is also supposed to have held a lamp, but this seems doubtful. It probably held an image of St. Christopher or of the saint in whose honour the hospice was dedicated.

Close by is the fine old house called Alcombe, and to the north the Elizabethan manor house of Hazelbury.

From Chapel Plaster I went down into the high vale and then up over Box Hill into Corsham. This large and ancient village lies in the valley of the Avon, or rather on the eastward sloping hills to the west of that river above Lacock. All this highland from Monkton northward is the steep and narrow watershed

between the Avon on the east and the By Brook, a stream of the Cotswolds which joins it at Bathford.

Leland, riding on his way from Malmesbury to Bradford, speaks of Corsham or Cosham, as he calls it, as "a good uplandish toun, wher be ruines of an old maner place; and therby a park wont to be yn dowage to the Quenes of *Englande*. *Mr. Baynton* yn Quene *Anne's* (Boleyn) dayes pullid down by licens a peace of this house somewhat to help his buildinges at *Bromeham*. Old Mr. *Bonhome* told me that *Cosham* apperteinid to the erldom of *Cornevalle* and that *Cosham* was a mansion place longging to it wher sumtyme they lay. Al the menne of this tounelet wer bond: so that upon a tyme one of the Erles of *Cornevalle* hering them secretly to lament their state manumittid them for mony, and gave them the lordship of *Cosham* in copiehold to paie a chiefe rente."

As we see it to-day the "tounelet" of Corsham is a quiet and old-fashioned but not a very attractive place, I think, for though it was once a residence of the Saxon kings and later of the Earls of Cornwall, its only monuments are the much-restored church, the rebuilt Court and the seventeenth century almshouses with their cloister founded by Lady Hungerford in 1668.

The church, which of old had a central tower, was brutally restored in 1878. It still retains, however, its Norman nave and porch and Perpendicular chancel with the interesting Tropenell chapel on the north, a work also of the fifteenth century, with a noble but damaged screen of stone with fan vaulting under the loft. The principal monuments in the church are in this chapel. The best is the very fine tomb of Thomas Tropenell (d. 1490) of Great Chalfield and of Neston in this parish, and of his wife who was a Ludlow. There is also a smaller monument to a member of the same family. In one of the windows are some remains of old glass showing the sickle of the Hungerfords. The fine fifteenth century roof remains untouched. In the south wall is a good piscina, and against the east wall are two corbels, one over the other, bearing the arms of Tropenell and Ludlow. These corbels perhaps once bore statues.

The chapel in the south of the chancel is also a fine one of the fifteenth century, and the south porch is of the same date, and has the arms of Sir Edward Hungerford and Margaret his wife, who in 1668 founded the almshouse of which I have spoken adjoining the park.

Corsham Court is rather disappointing. Built, according to Aubrey, by a certain " Customer Smythe " in 1582, it has been added to and remodelled, but the best part of the south front remains a fine piece of Elizabethan work. The place was bought by the Hungerfords quite early in the seventeenth century, and in 1742 by Sir Paul Methuen, our ambassador in Madrid, to whom the fine collection of pictures is largely due.

It was not here at the Court, but at " the house of one Chamberlayne " that Henry Long was murdered in 1594 while at dinner with his brother, Sir Walter Long of South Wraxall, and others, by Sir Charles, and Sir Henry Danvers of Dauntsey, for some unknown reason. The assassins were never brought to justice; indeed, James I. created Sir Henry Baron, and Charles I. made him an Earl. Sir Charles Danvers, however, was executed in 1600, not for this inexplicable murder, but for complicity in Essex's plot.

Leaving Corsham by the high road to Bath, I left the way on the north to see the Jacobean manor house at Pickwick, and it is worth a visit, and then made my way to the top of Box Hill and so down to Box village where Coleridge once lodged at a grocer's and found a barrel of gunpowder under his bedroom.

Box is as old as the Romans, and boasts one of the few Roman villas Wiltshire owns. It stood to the north of the present church and was partly excavated in 1881, and more completely in 1900–2, but its existence was known as long ago as 1831, when a notice of it appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The villa was situated on the slope of the hill looking north over the valley of Box brook, and at least two miles from the Fosse Way on the Bath-Silchester road. It was built on the courtyard plan, and the walls were of the native stone; the pavements were of mosaic, and some of them remain. An altar and other remains are in the museum at Devizes.

The church dedicated in honour of St. Thomas of Canterbury is not very interesting. It consists of chancel with north vestry, central tower and nave with north and south aisle, and, save the south aisle, was built by the Bigods, lords of the manor in the fourteenth century. All has been much restored and the sedilia which Aubrey speaks of in the church are gone. The best part is the north aisle, the eastern bay of which is vaulted and has a three-light window on the north. The porch and window on either side of it are additions of the eighteenth century.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE FOOTHILLS OF THE COTSWOLDS

I LEFT Bath, alas! on the last stage of my journey, one morning early, and crossing the brook made for Ditcheridge or Ditteridge. All this country round Bath is full of Roman remains; indeed, within a radius of seven miles of that city at least eighteen villas have been found. One of these, perhaps the largest, is that at Box, of which I have spoken, with its mosaic floors and remains of a bath: there is another here at Ditteridge, and another again at Colerne, a mile away to the north. Both these places stand close to the great Roman road, the Fosse Way, which here forms the county boundary towards Gloucester over the hills. These hills are the lower heights of the Cotswold, and they stretch all the way from Bath and the Avon valley to Sherston and Tetbury on the extreme north-western boundary of Wilts, and so on into Gloucestershire. It was this country of hills which formed the last stage of my exploration of Wiltshire.

Ditteridge, whose beginning like enough was that Roman villa, boasts still one of the most interesting of little churches. To begin with, it is dedicated, as is most fitting so near the Roman road, to St. Christopher, patron of wayfarers, and then, so far as the nave goes, it is still a Norman building, while the chancel arch is an interesting one of the thirteenth century, and there is a bell turret over it. The nave is Norman with later additions, among them the Perpendicular window at the west end, a doorway of the same date now blocked on the north, and a fourteenth century south porch with an inner Norman doorway finely sculptured with ornament, and, supporting the lintel, two corbels carved as the heads of a man and a woman crowned. The font is also Norman.

The chancel, chancel arch, and bell turret are still of the thirteenth century, but the windows are Perpendicular. The narrowness of the chancel arch is striking and points to very early foundations. The arch itself is recessed and chamfered. In the south wall of the chancel is an Early English piscina with a curious shelf. Here, too, is a priest's door of the same period.

Many years ago certain mural paintings were discovered here under the whitewash. In the midst was a colossal figure of St. Christopher, a mermaid with a mirror appearing in front of him as he crosses the stream over which, all unknowing out of the goodness of his heart, he bore our Lord a little child. On the right was the hermit who "preached to him of Jesu Christ and informed him in the Faith diligently," as Voragine saith. On the left was a figure, perhaps of St. Michael, but perhaps representing the martyrdom of St. Christopher. No doubt other paintings are under the whitewash.

Close to Ditteridge is Cheney Court, a fine Jacobean house, now restored, of the Spekes of Hazelbury. Within upstairs are three beautiful fireplaces. The dower house of Cheney Court, known as Cole's farm, is close by. This is a small gabled and mullioned house of the seventeenth century with two good mantelpieces upstairs, and a very beautiful room on the ground floor with rich panelling and plaster ceiling dated 1649. Both these houses are well worth a visit.

I went on to Colerne, where the church of St. John Baptist is worth a visit if only for the sake of the fourteenth century work within. That the church stands on very ancient foundaations is certain. The nave is still Transitional Norman, and the chancel Early English and fully developed, the north aisle of the chancel is Decorated work of about 1280, while that of the nave is Perpendicular (1450). The tower, the south aisle and porch are, too, of the fifteenth century. All has, however, been much restored in 1875, and, indeed, in the chancel aisle or chapel little remains save the east window that is old.

The nave of four bays with round pillars is, as I say, Transitional Norman, the arches are pointed, the north side being later than the south, but the western arch on each side is of the fifteenth century. In the north aisle are corbel heads of the fourteenth century, which once supported the roof; they represent a mitred bishop or abbot, a nun, and a saint. A Perpendi-

cular oak screen divides nave and chancel under the arch, the inner sides of which rest on short pillar brackets; the shafts are detached and supported by corbel heads of a knight and a saint.

The chancel is the most interesting part of the church because of its curiously different piscina, sedilia, and arched Easter tomb; each as singularly lovely as it is strangely different from its fellows.

From Colerne I made my way by the byways north-east to Slaughterford, where I crossed the Brook and then winding at first a little down the valley, climbed up to Biddestone. Slaughterford must, I suppose, get its name from some great battle, perhaps of the Britons and Saxons. It certainly does not derive it from Alfred's slaughter of the Danes at Ethandune—a battle which some, among them Mr. P. Scrope, have thought to have been decided in this neighbourhood and have commemorated by a tower here.

Biddestone once possessed two noble churches. Alas! that of SS. Peter and Paul which, in Aubrey's days, was "lamentably ruined and converted into a barne," was utterly destroyed in 1840. Only its bell turret is preserved in the grounds at Castle Combe. The other and, I suppose, smaller church of St. Nicholas, happily remains to us. It consists of nave, with south porch, chancel, with bell turret, and an addition to the east said to have been built with stones from the ruined church. That a Norman church stood here the south doorway remains to testify, its tympanum filled with a cross in low relief. The chancel is of the thirteenth century but, unfortunately, the east end was destroyed when the addition was made with the stones of SS. Peter and Paul. The lower part of the bell turret is Early English, but the spire is Perpendicular, as is the chancel arch. All was restored in 1900.

Biddestone is, however, well worth a visit for its own sake, its old houses and tithe barn, in spite of the reproach Aubrey throws at it: "heretofore nothing but religious houses, now nothing but Quakers and fanatics. A sour woodsere country and inclines people to contemplation so that and the Bible and ease (for it is now all up with dairy grazing and cheathing) set their witts a running and reforming."

From Biddestone I went on my way to see the beautiful manor house of Sheldon, to the north-east a mile or more away,

which, though it may be said to date from Norman times, is, as we see it, Jacobean, a work of the Hungerfords who sold it in 1684. The beautiful south porch, however, remains of the end of the thirteenth century, and is the earliest piece of properly domestic architecture in the county. Above is a parvise, which has a two-light pointed window in the gable. This is all that is left of the house the Gascelynes, who had received the manor by marriage from the Godarvilles, built.

To the north of Biddestone lies Yatton Keynell where there is a fine, if small, manor house of the seventeenth century, and a church dedicated in honour of St. Margaret that, in spite of restoration, is, perhaps, worth seeing.

The true name of this parish, according to Canon Jackson, is Eaton Keynell, being that of a family to whom it belonged in the fourteenth century. The Snells held it in the seventeenth century, and it is to them, I suppose, the manor house is due.

The earliest part of the church is the tower arch, and this is of the thirteenth century. But the building, as a whole, is of the fifteenth, and from this time the chancel arch with its fine stone screen remains unspoilt. Aubrey alludes to this screen as " the partition between the church and chancel of very curious Gothique make in freestone." In the lower panels are the arms of Yeovilton, Keynell and Chaderton ; the tower is remarkable in that it has a panelled belfry stage, a rare thing in this country. In Catholic times, I suppose, the church was used as a school. At any rate, Aubrey says he had heard his grandfather say that " when he went to school in this church in the south window of the chancel were several escutcheons, which a herald that passed by took note of ; which window is now dammed up with stones and now no memorie left of them." It is as though we heard holy Mr. Herbert speaking :—

> " Only a herald who that way doth pass
> Findes his crackt name at length in the church glass."

Aubrey, like his grandfather, went to school here. He tells us in his " National History of Wilts " that " he entered into his grammar at the Latin School at Yatton Keynell in the church where the Curate Mr. Hart taught the oldest boys Virgil, Ovid, Cicero, etc." And he goes on to describe how the old missals of Malmesbury Abbey were destroyed by being used for book covers !

Aubrey also mentions a pulpit here "of stone the most curious carving in our county." Like the missals, this has utterly disappeared.

To the north west of Yatton, in the valley of the By Brook, lies Castle Combe, and this is undoubtedly the loveliest village in Wiltshire among these hills. In its character it belongs not to Wilts at all but to the west country, and in its own way is as unique as Clovelly. It lies in the bottom and climbs a little



The Market Cross, Castle Combe.

up the hillside, and is dominated wholly by the great wooded hill upon which the Norman castle which names it stood of old. The builders of this castle and the first family of which we have any record in this delicious place were the Dunstanvilles. From them it passed to the Badlesmeres and from them by marriage in 1322 to the Scropes, who dwelt here for near 500 years, till in 1807 Castle Combe was bought by the late S. C. Lowndes, and from him passed to his brother, Sir John Guest. But long before the Dunstanvilles built this castle here, Castle Combe existed, as the pre-historic earthworks on the castle hill bear witness: nor was the place wholly unknown, I suppose, to the

Romans. It lies not much more than a mile to the east of the Fosse Way, and the site of a Roman villa has been uncovered in the valley between it and North Wraxall, while recently at Nettleton Scrub a considerable fragment of Roman sculpture has been unearthed.

But it is, after all, with the delicious village we have, with its fine church, old manor house, dower house of the seventeenth century, beautiful old gabled houses and flower-covered cottages and ancient market cross that we are concerned.

Unfortunately, the church of St. Andrew was restored and largely rebuilt in 1851, but the fine tower, by which under a good stone vaulted roof of fan tracery one enters the church, remains of the first half of the fifteenth century. The rebuilding was, of course, a misfortune, whether inevitable or not, but certain features of the church were carefully preserved. Among these are the Early English east window of four lancets with quatrefoil over them, and the magnificent chancel arch richly carved having three figures in canopied niches under it on either side. The figures are on the south in the spring of the arch—a female saint, then St. Andrew and then St. James; on the north a female saint, St. Bartholomew and St. Peter. These are, as is the arch, of the fourteenth century. The altar tomb of Walter de Dunstanville who died in 1270, also remains with its effigy in complete chain armour and blazoned shield, a far less lovely work, however, than that of Longespée in Sarum Cathedral.

In the pretty churchyard beyond, from which one looks into the gardens of the great house, lies England's late representative in Egypt, Sir Eldon Gorst.

One could spend days in Castle Combe, its west country face is so fair; and, indeed, I did, making more than one excursion thence before going on northward. Thus I visited North Wraxall and West Kington in the hills to the west.

North Wraxall boasts an ancient church and the remains of an old fifteenth century house. It is a very ancient place, the manor being held at the time of the Domesday Survey by Godfrey, and in 1242 by Eustace de Wrokesdale. It passed through very many hands, however, before the Dissolution of the monasteries, and its fate was little thereafter until 1682 it was bought by James Waller, of Trowbridge, from whom the property has descended to its present owner, Lord Methuen.

The church of St. James still possesses a south doorway of early twelfth century work, but all the rest of the church was rebuilt in the thirteenth century—nave, chancel and west tower, and to this beside the triple lancet of the chancel, the priest's doorway there and the two lancets in the north wall the width of the chancel arch bear ample witness.

In the south wall of the nave is a very good three-light window of the fourteenth century under a gable, and to the fourteenth century, too, is due the south porch. The tower arch has apparently been mutilated. The font is of the same time as the south porch, the oak pulpit is a fine one and Jacobean, and on the north side of the nave the Methuen mortuary chapel—of old it would have been a chantry—was built in 1793—ominous date.

West Kington is to be remembered chiefly as the rectory of the unhappy Latimer, who was here from 1530–35. Aubrey speaks of "a little scrubbed hollow oak called Latimer's Oak where he used to sit in the walk at the Parsonage House." This is gone. In his letter Latimer speaks of West Kington as "my little Bishoprick," and adds so that we may clearly see the trend of his unhappy thoughts: "I dwell within half a mile of the Fosseway and you would wonder to see how they [the pilgrims] came by flocks out of the west country to many images, but chiefly to the blood of Hailes." Better such a pilgrimage of grace than one which would have brought them to Kington to hear the chaplain of Anne Boleyn.

Latimer Farm, as we see it, at least can have had no connection with its namesake, for it is of the seventeenth century. But the pulpit in the church is said to be that from which he preached his humorous sermons.

The church itself, save that it has a tower with panelled belfry stage like that we have seen at Yatton Keynell and shall see at Nettleton, is without interest for it has been rebuilt.

I set out from Castle Combe for the last time early one fine autumn morning, and going southward crossed the Fosse Way under Leighurs on the road to Burton. Langbury Long Barrow stands 200 yards west of the Roman road to the north of Fosse Farm. At the east end of it is a cromlech, one large slab of stone leaning against two uprights. The barrow, which is chambered and stone built, was investigated by Hoare, who found within a burial of a single crouched skeleton with a small

pointed flint implement. Later four other chambers were discovered on the south side containing in all twenty-six skeletons.

Burton is really a hamlet of Nettleton, but it contains the parish church, and on that account should be visited, for the church of our Lady there is one of the most interesting in this part of the county. It consists of chancel with south chapel, nave with north aisle, north and south porches and western tower.

That a Norman church once stood here the circular font bears witness, though nothing of the building remains to us. It is true that the arcade seems at first to be Norman, but in fact it is nothing of the sort, but that most curious thing, a fourteenth century copy of a Norman work, and, as we might expect, a very poor effort.

The whole church, save the chancel, porches and tower, is, indeed, a fourteenth century building, even the roof over the western part of the aisle being still of that date, though the other roofs in the church are of the fifteenth century, when the aisle was lengthened and the windows we see inserted. Here is a seventeenth century brass. The chancel was re-built at this time also, and the beautiful little "Sanctus" bell-cot over the chancel arch erected, with the curious projection on the south, a transept or chapel, and the two porches, that on the north a particularly fine one richly vaulted within and parapeted without with gargoyles and grotesques. The south porch is now used as a vestry.

The tower resembles those at Yatton Keynell and West Kington in that it has a panelled belfry stage, but is much the finest of the three.

From Burton I made my way up to Littleton Drew where the church possesses no point of interest save that it still keeps a good recumbent effigy under an arch in the south wall of the nave. But in the churchyard on either side the path is a stone of a Saxon cross shaft, thought to be fragments of one of the crosses erected at the various resting-places of the funeral procession of St. Aldhelm when his body was borne from Doulting to Malmesbury.

From Littleton Drew I made my way through Alderton to Luckington, where the church has been too much restored to have any interest left to it. My reason for going to Luckington was, however, that I wished to visit the rising places of the

western Avon which are in this parish. I found them, or thought I did, at Brook End, and having saluted them, went on to Great Sherston.

Sherston is a curious and very interesting place. It is built, or part of it is, within a great fortified earthwork, not only on a point of land between two streams but aloft over an escarpment very steep on all sides save the east. It is, therefore, with little surprise one learns that Sherston is considered to be the Scoustan of Henry of Huntingdon, where in 1016 Edmund Ironside met the Danes under Canute. Ethelred was just dead, and Edmund having been proclaimed King, met the Danes at Pen in Somerset and routed them, but they rallied, and about midsummer he met them again here at Sherston, as is thought, and "retired from a drawn battle." The English, we read, had begun to give way at the instance of Edric who, "being on the enemies' side and holding in his hand a sword stained with the blood of a fellow whom he had dexterously slain, cried, 'Fly, wretches, fly, behold your king was slain by this sword.' The English would have fled immediately but the King apprised of this circumstance proceeded to an eminence and taking off his helmet shewed his face to his comrades . . . Night put a stop to the battle, the hostile armies retreating as if by mutual consent though the English had well nigh obtained the victory." Perhaps the height where the king stood to encourage his army was that we see to-day looking so steeply over the western approach.

That Sherston was a place of some importance in Norman days its church of Holy Cross bears witness. It consists, as we see it, of nave with north aisle of four bays, central tower, north transept, south chapel out of the eastern part of the nave, another chapel eastward of this extending past the greater part of the chancel, and a south porch with priest's room over it. The nave, arcade, and the font are late Norman work, the round arches borne on circular columns with moulded bases and square capitals having a various scallop ornament. The arch opening into the south nave chapel is similar but richer. The church was remodelled in the earlier part of the thirteenth century, when the tower, chancel, transept, and north aisle were rebuilt in a very beautiful fashion; indeed, nothing could be nobler than the lower part of the tower which remains absolutely of this time. Its four arches are really lovely, with rich

moulded capitals, the shafts springing from carved heads; on the west a king and queen, on the north a woman's head in a wimple, on the east a man's head with a cap tied under the chin; the other heads are modern. The upper part of the tower is a rebuilding of various times.

To this same time belong the beautiful east window of the chancel with its triple lights with trefoil heads and richly moulded arch carried on shafts with moulded capitals and bases, and the north transept with its untouched windows and piscina; and here are traces of wall painting.

The north aisle keeps at least its thirteenth century trefoil arched doorway, and the wide arch between the aisle and transept. Here is a recessed tomb of the early fifteenth century.

Of the fourteenth century there remains in the church only the recessed tomb under the north window of the transept with its recumbent effigy of a vested priest.

The fifteenth century has left, of course, its mark on the church. To the middle of that century the beautiful porch with parvise over it is due, as is the chapel eastward of it. The porch is very fine, with an empty niche under a groined canopy and crocketed finial over it, while the lower stage is splendidly vaulted in stone, the ribs supported on corbel heads.

The south transept chapel, which stretches along the chancel, is a little later. It is of three bays, and in the middle bay is a priest's door with a small window over. Both it and the neighbouring chapel are parapeted without, and between it and the chancel is a four-centred arch. Between the chancel and the north transept an ambulatory passage was built in the end of the fifteenth century. The pulpit is Jacobean, and in the eastern chapel is a rather charming mural monument to Joyce, wife of Giles Hutchings (d. 1715) with her kneeling effigy, the grave in the floor surrounded by ironwork.

But I have as yet said nothing of the most famous thing the church can boast, the figure of Rattle Bone in the east face of the porch. This Aubrey thus describes: "In the wall of the church porch on the outside in a niche without inscription or scutcheon is a little figure about 2 foote and a halfe high, ill done which they call Rattle Bone, who the tradition is did much service against the Danes when they infested this part of the countrey; the figure resembles more a priest than a soldier;

something looks like a maniple and his Robe is a kind of cope. The old women and children have these verses by tradition, viz.

"'Lye wil Kattlebone
Thou shalt have Sherston,'
'What shall I with Sherston do
Without I have all things thereto?'
'Thou shalt have Wyck and Wellesley,
Easton Grey and Pinkney.'"

Mr. Ponting tells us that the figure is actually three feet three inches high. It is not in a niche, but stands on a corbel coeval with the porch, and evidently represents an Archbishop, for it wears the pallium. I suggest it may be an effigy of St. Aldhelm, whose body probably passed this way on its way to Malmesbury.

In the vicarage garden is the finely panelled socket of the village cross, and a house behind the Kattlebones Inn is said to be the "old Rectory"; it appears to be of the fifteenth century. So I left Great Sherston and went on my way mournful at last, for I was at the end of my journey. At Easton Grey I crossed the Fosse Way and I stayed a little to look on the site of the large Roman settlement in which Hoare thought to find Mutuantonis, White Walls, and remembered the coins, the foundations, the pavements I had heard of as uncovered here, and especially that relief of four figures under an arch inscribed CIVILIS FECIT, and the head of the statue of a woman or a goddess found here in 1810 and now preserved at Easton Grey House. Then with slow steps I went on into Malmesbury.

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